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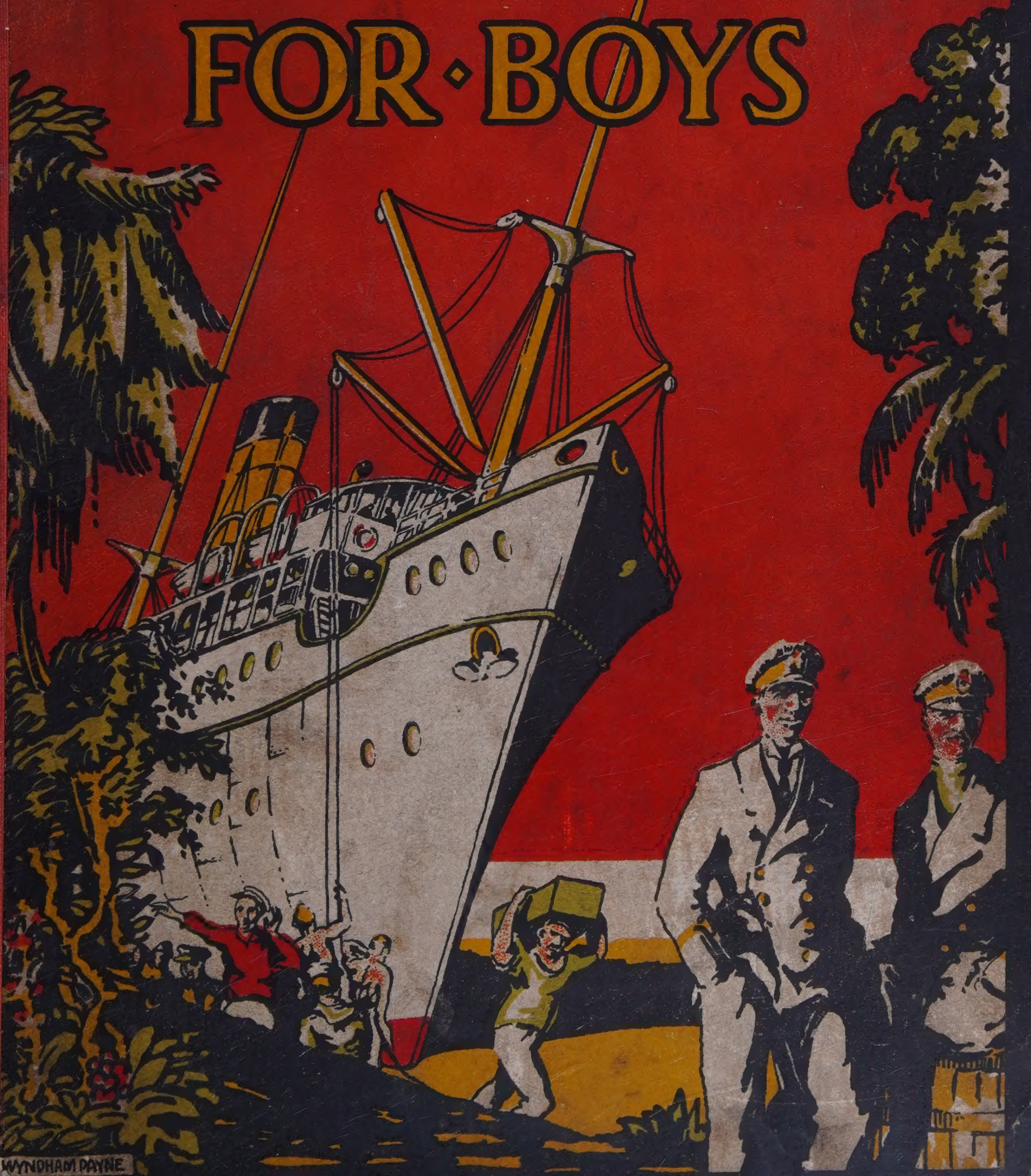

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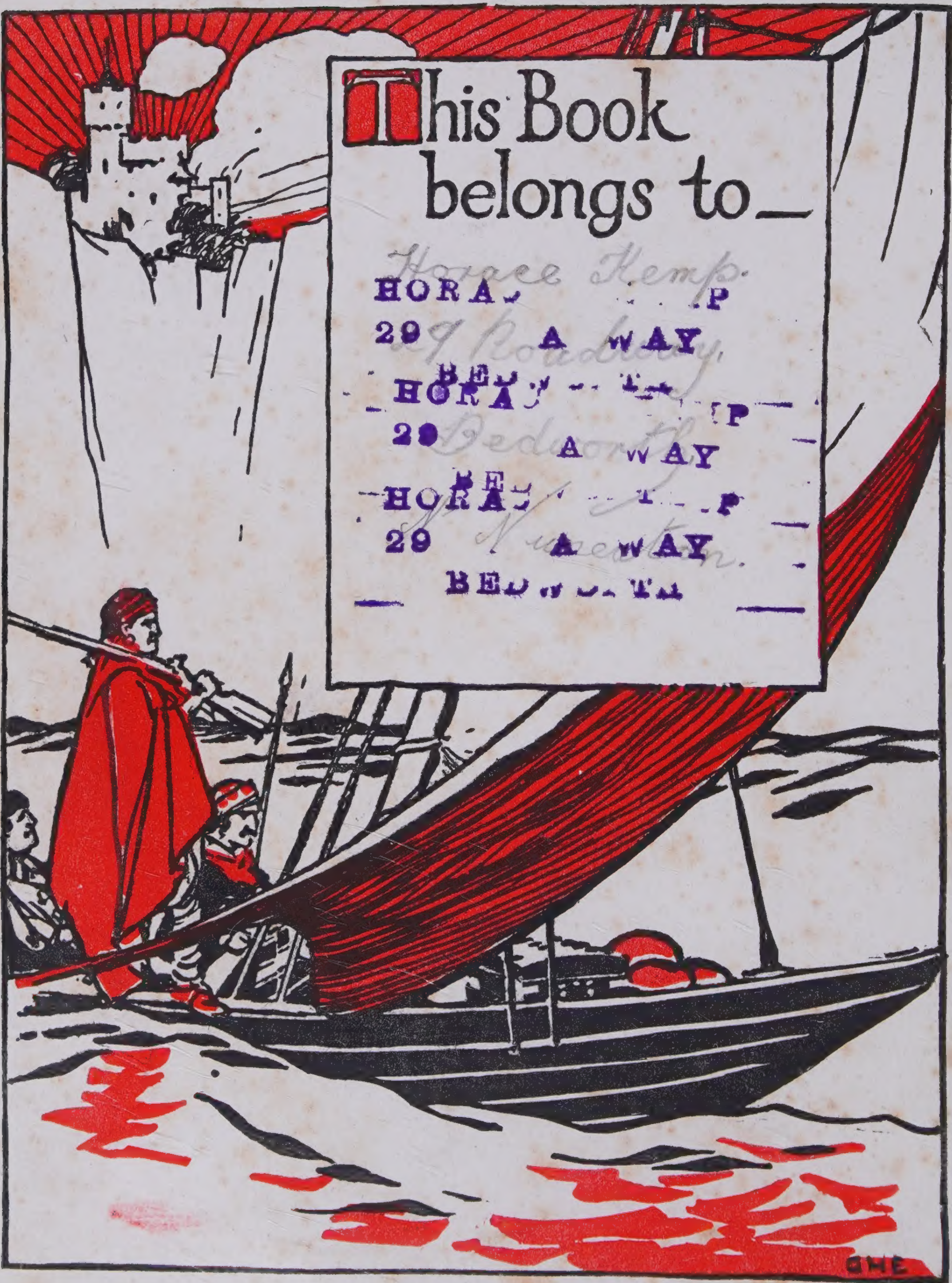

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"There goes the 'Betsy Jane'!"

The Red Book for Boys

Edited by Herbert Strang

HUMPHREY · MILFORD
OXFORD · UNIVERSITY · PRESS · LONDON

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Some of the pieces in this volume appeared first in my Annual. I have to thank Mr. Alfred Noyes for permitting me to include his poem, "The Highwayman," and Mr. W. M. Meredith for the chapter from George Meredith's *Shaving of Shagpat*.

H. S.

REPRINTED 1926 IN GREAT BRITAIN BY R. CLAY AND SONS, LTD.,
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

TRAPPED

A TALE OF THE MEXICAN WAR

By G. A. HENTY

Better than five years back, in '47, I was fighting in Mexico. It wasn't much regular up and down fighting we had, though we had some toughish battles too, but it was skirmishing here, skirmishing there, keeping one eye always open; for man, woman, and child hated us like poison, and it was little mercy that a straggler might expect if he got caught away from his friends. Their partisan chiefs, half-soldier half-robber, did us more harm than the regulars, and mercy was never given or asked between them and us. Me and Rube Pearson worked mostly together. We had fought the Indians out on the prairies for years side by side, and when Uncle Sam wanted men to lick the Mexicans, we concluded to go in together. We 'listed as scouts to the "Rangers," that is, we agreed to fight as much as we were wanted to fight, and to go on in front as scouts, in which way we had many a little scrimmage on our own account; but we didn't wear any uniform, or do drill, which couldn't have been expected of us. We shouldn't have been no good as regulars, and every one knew that there were no better scouts in the army than Rube Pearson and Seth Harper. Lor', what a fellow Rube was, to be sure! I ain't a chicken, but I was a baby by the side of Rube. He was six feet four if he was an inch, and so broad that he looked short unless you saw him by the side of another man. I do believe Rube Pearson was the strongest man in the world.

One day our captain sent for Rube and me, and says, " I've got a job for you two scouts. It's a dangerous one, but you won't like it any the worse for that, I know."

" Not a bit," said Rube, with a laugh. He was the lightest-hearted fellow, was Rube; always gay and jolly, and wouldn't have hurt a squirrel, except in stand-up fight and as a matter of business.

" What is it, Cap ? " said I " You've only got to give us the word, and we're off."

" I've had a message," he said, " from Colonel Cabra of their service, that he is ready to turn traitor, and hand us over some correspondence of Santa Anna, of which he has somehow got possessed. Being a traitor, he won't trust any one; and the only plan we can hit upon is, that he shall make a journey to San Miguel, thirty miles north of this, as if on business. I am to make an expedition in that direction, and am to take him prisoner. He will then hand over the papers. We shall bring him here, and, after keeping him for a time, let him go on parole. No suspicion will therefore at any future time arise against him, which there might be if we met in any other way. The papers are very important, and the affair must not be suffered to slip through. The country between this and San Miguel is peaceful enough, but we hear that El Zeres' band is out somewhere in that direction. He has something like two hundred cut-throats with him of his own, and there is a rumour that other bands have joined him. Now I want you to go on to-morrow to San Miguel. Go in there after dusk, and take up your quarters at this address. It is a small wine-shop in a street off the market. Get up as Mexicans. It only requires a big cloak and a sombrero. You can both speak Spanish well enough to pass muster. Stay all next day and till daybreak on the morning afterwards, and then ride back on this road. You will find out, in the first place, whether Cabra has arrived, and, in the next place, whether El Zeres is in the neighbourhood. I shall only bring forty men, as I do not wish it to be supposed that I am going on more than a mere scouting expedition. You understand ? "

" All right, Cap; we'll do it," I said, and we went off to our quarters.

TRAPPED

I can't say I altogether liked the job. It was a long way from headquarters, and, do what they may, two men can't fight more than, say, ten or a dozen. I was rather surprised to see by Rube's face that he rather liked it, but I did not find out till late that night what it was pleased him; then the truth came out.

"We had better start early, Seth," said he; "say at daybreak."

"What for, Rube?" I said. "The Cap said we were to go in after dusk. It's only thirty miles; we shan't want to start till three o'clock."

Rube laughed. "I don't want to get there before dusk, but I want to start at daybreak, and I'll tell you why. You remember Pepita?"

"There," said I, "if I didn't think it had something to do with a woman. You are always running after some one, Rube. They will get you into a scrape some day."

Rube laughed. "I am big enough to get out of it if it does, Seth; but you know I did feel uncommon soft towards Pepita, and really thought of marrying and taking her back to Missouri."

"Only she wouldn't come, Rube?"

"Just so, Seth," said he, laughing. "So we agreed we would be the best friends; and she asked me, if ever I went out to San Miguel, to go and see her. She said her father was generally out, but would be glad to see me if he were in. She lives in a small haciénda, a league this side of the town."

I saw that it was of no use to argue, but I didn't like it. The Mexican women hated us worse than the men did, and that warn't easy to do; and many of our fellows had been murdered after being enticed by them to out-of-the-way places. Still, in the present case, I did not see that the girl could have expected that Rube would be there unless the rest of us were near at hand, and I did not attempt to oppose Rube's wishes.

So next morning off we started, and by ten o'clock we rode up to the door of the place which Rube said answered to the description Pepita had given him. It was a pretty place, with trees round it, and might have been the residence of a small proprietor such as Pepita had described her father to be. As we rode up to the door it opened, and I saw at once that Rube was right, for a dark-eyed Mexican girl came out and looked at us inquiringly.

"What can I do for you, señors?" she asked.

"Don't you remember me, Doña Pepita?" Rube said, laughing, as he lifted the sombrero which had shaded his face.

The girl started violently. "Ah, Señor Americano, is it you? I might have known, indeed," she said, smiling, "by your size, even wrapped up. This, of course, is Señor Seth: you are always together. But come in," she said.

"Who have you got inside, Doña Pepita?" Rube asked. "I know that I can trust you, but I can't trust others, and I don't want it known I am here."

"The house is empty," Pepita said. "My father is out. There is only old Jacinta at home."

At this moment an old woman made her appearance at the door, and at a word from Pepita took our horses, while Pepita signed to us to enter.

"Excuse me, señora," I said. "We will go first and see our horses stabled. It is our custom; one never knows when he may want them."

I thought Pepita looked annoyed, but it was only for a moment, and then she said something in one of the country dialects to the old woman. She nodded her head, and went off round to the back of the house, we leading our horses and following her. The stables, I observed, were singularly large and well kept for a house of its size; but, to my surprise, instead of going to the long range of buildings, the old woman led the way to a small shed.

"Ain't these stables?" said I.

She shook her head, and said in Spanish, "They were once, but we have only two horses. Now they are used as a store for grain. The master has the key."

I could not contradict her, though I believed she was telling me a lie. However, we fastened our horses up in the shed, put the pistols from our holsters into our belts, and, taking our rifles in our hands, entered the house.

Pepita received us very warmly, and busied herself assisting the old woman to get us something to eat; after which she and Rube began love-making, and it really seemed as if the girl meant to change her mind, and go back with Rube, after all. There was nothing, in fact, to justify my feeling uneasy, except that, while Pepita had promised me when I entered the house not to tell the old woman who we were, I was convinced that she had done so by the glances of scowling hatred which the old hag threw at us whenever she came into the room. Still I was uneasy, and shortly made some excuse to leave the room and saunter round and about the house, to assure myself that Pepita had spoken truly when she had said that there was no one there except the old woman and herself. I found nothing to excite the smallest suspicion, and was therefore content to return to the room and to throw myself lazily down and go off for a siesta, in the wakeful intervals of which I could hear that Pepita had given way, and that the delighted Rube was arranging with her how she should escape and join him when the army retired ; for of course neither had any idea that her father would consent to her marrying one of the hated enemies of his country.

At three o'clock I roused myself, and soon after the old woman came into the room with some lemonade. I observed that Pepita changed colour, but she said nothing, and a moment after, making some excuse, she left the room. I was about to speak to Rube on the subject, when the window was darkened with men. Five or six shots were fired at us, and with a yell a crowd of Mexicans rushed into the room.

As they appeared, Rube sprang up with the exclamation, "Trapped, by thunder!" and then fell flat on his back, shot, I believed, through the head.

I rushed to my rifle, seized it, but before I could get it to my shoulder it was knocked from my hand. Half-a-dozen fellows threw themselves upon me, and I was a prisoner. I didn't try to resist when they laid hands on me, because I knew I should have a knife in me at once ; and though I knew my life was not worth an hour's purchase—no, nor five minutes'—after I was caught, still, upon the whole, it was as well to live that five minutes as not.

There was such a hubbub and a shouting at first that I couldn't hear a word, but at last I picked up that they were a party of the band of El Zeres, who was in the neighbourhood, and had been fetched by a boy that traitress Pepita had dispatched for them directly we arrived.

Pepita herself was wife of one of the other chiefs of the band. Much fun was made of poor Rube and myself about our courting. I felt mad with myself for having been caught so foolishly. I couldn't feel angry with Rube, with him lying dead there, but I was angry with myself for having listened to him. I oughtn't to have allowed him to have his own way. While I was thinking this out in my mind I had my eyes fixed upon poor Rube, whom no one thought of noticing, when all of a sudden I gave quite a start, for I saw him move. I couldn't see his face, but I saw a hand stealing gradually out towards the leg of a man who stood near. Then there was a pause, and then the other hand began to move. It wasn't at all like the aimless way that the arms of a badly hit man would move, and I saw at once that Rube had been playing "possum" all along.

I held my breath, for I saw he had come to the conclusion that he could not be overlooked much longer, and was going to make a move.

In another minute there was a crash and a shout as the two men fell to the ground with their legs knocked clean from under them, catching hold of other men and dragging them down with them. From the midst of the confusion Rube leapt to his feet and made a rush for the window. One man he levelled with a blow of his fist; another he caught up as if he had been a baby, and hurling him against two others, brought them on the ground together; and then, leaping over their bodies, dashed through the window before the Mexicans had recovered from their astonishment. I could have laughed out loud at the yell of rage and amazement with which they set off in pursuit; but two or three of them remained to guard me, and I might have got a knife in my ribs, so I kept quiet. I did just feel so glad to see Rube was alive, that I hardly remembered that it warn't likely that either he or I would be so long; for I did not for a moment expect that he would make good his escape. The odds were too great against it, especially in broad daylight. Even on horseback, it would be next to impossible. No one but Rube would have attempted such a thing; but he never stopped to think about odds or chances when his dander was up. In less than no time I heard a shot or two, then there was a silence for a time, then a shout of triumph. I knew it was all over, and that Rube was taken again.

He told me afterwards that he had made a dash round to the stable, where he had found seven or eight Mexicans looking after the horses; that he had knocked down one or two who were in his way, had leapt upon the nearest animal, and had made off at the top of his speed, but that a dozen others were after him in an instant; and seeing that he would be lassoed and thrown from his horse, he had stopped and thrown up his arms in token of surrender. Rube's hands were bound tightly behind him, and he was led back into the room.

He gave a loud laugh when he saw me. "That was a boy's trick, wasn't it, Seth? But I couldn't have helped it if I had been shot a minute afterwards. There were those fellows' legs moving about me just as if I was a log of wood. The thought came across me, 'A good sharp rap above the ankle and over you'd go'; and when I'd once thought of it, I was obliged to do it.

"I am main sorry, old hoss, that I've got you into this scrape, but I expect we shall get out again somehow. I don't think Rube Pearson is going to be wiped out yet."

I hoped not too. I warn't a bit tired of life, but I did not see my way out of it. However, I had one comfort: I knew if any two men could get out of an ugly mess, those two men were Rube and I.

We were now told to sit down on the ground in one corner of the room, two fellows taking up their station by our sides. Then there was a hot discussion about our fate, which warn't exactly pleasant to listen to. Some were in favour of hanging us at once, but the majority were for taking us to the main body under El Zeres himself, because the chief would be so glad to have us in his power. He had frequently vowed vengeance against us, for we were known as the most active scouts in the army, and had led troops in his pursuit many a time, and had once or twice come very near to catching him. He had vowed solemnly to his patron saint, that if we fell into his hands he would put us to death with unheard-of tortures; and as El Zeres was rather celebrated that way, it warn't altogether pleasant to listen to. But we put a good face on the matter, for it would never have done to let those Mexican varmints see that two backwoodsmen, who had fought them and beaten them time after time, were afraid to die when their time came. Presently there was a little stir, and Pepita came into the room. I rather think that, though the girl hated us, she didn't like to come into the room where one of us was, she thought, lying dead. Now she came in, looking, I will say for her, uncommonly pretty. She came straight up to us, and looked us full in the face. I paid no attention to her, but Rube nodded quite cheerfully.

"Well, señora, so you were making fools of us, after all! Well, I ain't the first chap that's been fooled by a pretty woman; that's one comfort, anyhow. I suppose our engagement is to be considered at an end, eh?" and he laughed.

"American dog!" the girl said, with her eyes flashing with rage, "did you think you were so good-looking that the women of the nation you tread upon are all to lose their hearts to you? We are Mexicans, and we hate you!" and she stamped her foot with passion.

Rube laughed unconcernedly. "Well, señora, after what you now permit me to see of you, I am really thankful that you are so kind and lenient. Thunder! what a fate mine would have been if you had taken it into your head to marry me!"

There was a general laugh among the men at the cool way in which Rube treated the girl, and the enraged Pepita struck him a box on the ear. It was a hearty one, but Rube's face hardly changed, and he said, still smiling—

"We have a custom in the States, Pepita, that when a gal boxes a man's ears, he has a right to give her a kiss. You are reversing that; I had the kisses this afternoon, and now I have got the box on the ear."

There was again a roar of laughter among the Mexicans, and the enraged woman drew a knife, and would have stabbed Rube to the heart had she not been seized by the men standing round her and forced from the room. We were kept in that room under a guard, so watchful that any attempt to escape was out of the question, until three o'clock the next morning. The horses were then saddled, and we were soon off, Rube and I riding in the midst of the party with our hands tied behind us, so that we could not hold the bridle. We had found out from the

conversation that El Zeres with his band was about twenty-five miles distant.

Upon our ride, I found an opportunity for the first time since our capture for a talk with Rube.

"What do you think of it, Seth?"

"Looks bad, Rube," I said. "If we find El Zeres in camp, I expect he will make short work of us; if he is away, I suppose we shall get till to-morrow morning. If we are to escape at all, it must be to-night."

"Escape!" Rube said scoffingly; "of course we are going to escape. The question is, Which one of all the ways open to us are we to choose?" and he laughed merrily.

"I don't quite see all the ways yet, Rube; however, we shall see what sort of a place we are put in to-night, and can then come to some conclusion. There comes the sun."

It was about nine o'clock when we rode into camp; and as we approached it, we acknowledged that a better place against a sudden surprise could hardly have been chosen. The ground was flat for miles round, but the site of the camp rose in a slight mound, of nearly circular form, and perhaps one hundred yards across. The central part was thirty feet or so above the general level. Round this the band of El Zeres was encamped. Rube and I guessed them at four hundred strong. There was an attempt at military order, for, by the bundles of wearing apparel, etc., it was evident that the men slept round a series of bivouac fires, extending in a circle round the foot of the mound. Within the line of fires the horses were picketed in two rows. In the centre of the circle, upon the highest point of the rise, was a small house. As we approached, we could see a stir in the camp. A party of men were mounting their horses, as if for an expedition.

"I hope El Zeres is on the point of starting somewhere, Rube," I said, "and that he is in too great a hurry to stop to amuse himself with us, as he has threatened. It will give us another day."

"I hope so," Rube said; "it's hard if we don't manage to make tracks if we get twenty-four hours."

On reaching the camp we were ordered to alight; and upon its being known who we were, there were as many shouts of triumph as if we had been generals.

"We are quite celebrated characters, Seth," Rube said, with his usual laugh.

"Ah," said I, "we could do without such celebrity just at present."

"I don't know," Rube said. "If we were mere American soldiers, they would cut our throats at once; as it is, they may keep us for a more ceremonial killing."

As we were talking, we were being led up towards the central hut, which was evidently the abode of the chief. He was standing at the door, tapping his riding-boot impatiently with a heavy whip. A man was holding his horse in readiness. One of the other leaders was standing talking to him. "Jehoshaphat!" said I, "he is going out. We are safe for a while."

El Zeres was a slight, wiry man, with a small wicked-looking eye, which gave one the squirms to look at, and a thin mouth curved up in a cruel smile. He was the savagest and most bloodthirsty of all the Mexican partisans. The man with him was a tall, swarthy, ferocious-looking villain.

El Zeres looked at us for some time without a word. Then he said, " I've got you at last; I've been on the look-out for you for a long time past."

" It hasn't been our fault we haven't met before," said Rube; which was true enough, for we had given him a close chase several times. El Zeres only gave an evil smile, but the other Mexican exclaimed savagely, " You dog, do you dare to answer ? " and struck Rube across the face with all his force with his heavy whip.

Rube turned quite white, and then, with a tremendous effort, he broke the cowhide thongs which fastened his hands—not new rope, mind you, but cowhide—just as if it had been so much grass, and went right at the fellow who had struck him. The Mexicans gave a cry of astonishment, and threw themselves upon Rube, El Zeres shouting at the top of his voice, " Don't draw a knife, don't draw a knife! I'll hang any man who injures him."

Rube had got the fellow by the throat with both hands, and though the crowd of men who threw themselves upon him pulled him to the ground, he never let go, but brought the man down too. I knew it was all over with him. I was quite mad to join in and help; but though I tugged and strained at my thongs till they cut into my wrists, I could not succeed. For a while they lay in a struggling mass on the ground, and then Rube shook himself free of them for a moment and got to his feet. A dozen men were upon him in a moment; but he was blind with rage, and would not have minded if it had been a thousand. Those who came in front went down, as if shot, before the blows of his fists; but others leapt on him from behind, and then the struggle began again. I never saw sich a thing before, and never shall again. It was downright awful. They could not hold his arms. Their weight, over and over again, got him upon the ground, and over and over again he was up on his feet; but his arms, somehow, they could not hold, and the work he did with them was awful. Anything he hit went down, and when he could not hit he gripped. It was like a terrier with rats: he caught 'em by the throat, and when he did, it was all up with them. Some of them made a grab for their knives, but they had no time to use them. In a moment their eyes would seem to start from their heads; and then, as he threw 'em away, they fell in a dead lump. How long this went on I can't say,—some minutes, though,—when a Mexican snatched the lasso, which every Mexican carries, from the saddle of El Zeres' horse, and dropped the noose over Rube's neck. In another moment he was lying half strangled upon the ground, and a dozen hands bound his hands behind him and his feet together with cowhide thongs. Then they stood looking at him as if he were some devil. And no wonder. Seven Mexicans lay dead on the ground, and many more were lying panting and bleeding around. The Mexicans are an active race of men, but not strong—nothing like an average American—and Rube at any time was a giant even among us scouts; and in his rage he seemed to have ten times his natural strength. El Zeres had never moved; and except shouting to his men not to use their knives, he had taken no part whatever in it—watching the struggle with that cruel smile, as if it had only been a terrier attacked by rats. When it was over he mounted his horse, and said to one of his lieutenants who was standing near, "I must go now. I leave these men in your charge, Pedro. Fasten that one's hands behind him; then take them inside. Put them in the inner room. Clear my things out. Take ten picked men, and don't let any one in or out till I return. I shall be back before daybreak. I shall amuse myself to-day with thinking how I shall try the nerves of these Americanos. I can promise you all a handsome amusement of some sort, anyhow." And he rode off.

I have often faced death, and ain't afraid of it; but the unruffled face and the cruel smile of that man made my flesh creep on my bones, as I thought of what Rube and I had got to go through the next day.

After El Zeres had ridden off, the lieutenant, Pedro, selected ten from the men around, and told them, in the first place, to clear the house of the hammock and other belongings of El Zeres, and when this was done, to carry Rube in. Bound and helpless as he was, there was a visible repugnance on the part of the men to touch him, so great was the fear which his tremendous strength had excited. However, six of them took him up and carried him into the hut—for it was little more—and threw him down like a log in the inner room. I walked in of my own accord, and sat down on the ground near him. I heard Pedro give orders to some of the men outside to take away the dead bodies and bury them, and for the rest to go down to their camp fires. Then he entered the house with his other four men.

The house was just the ordinary Mexican hut. It contained two rooms, or rather, one room partially divided into two, the inner compartment forming the sleeping-room of the family. There was no door between the rooms, nor was there any window; the light entering through the wide opening into the outer room. The outer room had no regular windows, only some chinks or loopholes, through which a certain amount of light could come; but these were stopped up with straw,—for the Mexicans are a chilly people,—and as the door was always open, plenty of light came in through it. The house was not built of adóbe, as are most Mexican huts, but of stones, with the interstices plastered with mud.

Never in my life did I feel that the game was up as I did when I sat down there and looked round. The men were seated on the ground in the next room, in full view of us, and every now and then one walked in to look at us. Helpless as we were, they had an uneasy doubt of what we might do. Rube still lay at full length on the ground. For a quarter of an hour I did not speak, as I thought it best to let him cool and quiet down a bit; and I thought and thought, but I couldn't, for the life of me, think out any plan of getting clear away. At last I thought I would stir Rube up. "How do you feel, Rube?" "Well, I feel just about tired out," Rube said; "just as if I had walked a hundred miles right on end. I've been a fool again, Seth, sure enough; but I've given some of them goss, that's a comfort. I'll just take a sleep for a few hours, and then we'll see about this business. Hollo, there!" he shouted in Spanish; "water." For a while no one attended to him; but he continued to shout, and I joined him, so that the men in the next room were obliged to leave off their talk to do as we wanted them. One of them got up and took a large copper pan, filled it with water from a skin, and placed it down between us; and then giving me a hearty kick—even then he did not dare kick Rube—went back to his pillow. It took some trouble and much rolling over before we could get our mouths over the pan to drink. When we had satisfied our thirst we rolled over again, made ourselves as comfortable as we could under the circumstances,—which warn't saying much,—and in a short time were both asleep; for we had only been four hours in bed for two nights.

I was pretty well accustomed to sleep on the ground, and I slept without waking for nearly seven hours; for when I did so, I saw at once it was nearly sunset. I can't say it was an agreeable waking, that; for I felt as if my shoulders were out of joint, and that I had two bands of red-hot iron round my wrists. My first move was to roll over and have another drink. Then I sat up and looked round. Rube was sitting up, looking at me. "So you are awake, Seth?" "Yes," said I. "Are you all right now, Rube?" "As right as can be," Rube said, in his ordinary cheerful tone; "except that I feel as if a fellow was sawing away at my ankles and wrists with a blunt knife." "That's about the state of my wrists," I said. "I don't mind my wrists so much," he said; "it's my feet bothers me. I shall be such a time before I can walk." "You needn't bother about that, Rube," said I. "It isn't much more walking your feet have got to do." "I hope they've got more to do than they've ever done yet, old hoss," Rube said; "at any rate, they've got a good thirty miles to do to-night." "Are you in earnest, Rube?" said I. "Never more so," said he. "All we've got to do is to get away, and then tramp it." "How do you mean to get away, Rube?" "Easy enough," Rube said carelessly. "Get our hands loose first, then our legs, then kill them fellows and make tracks."

Now it ain't very often that I laugh out; but Rube's coolness tickled me so, that I laughed out like a hyena. When I began, Rube he began; and when he laughed it was tremendous. I don't think Rube knew what I was laughing at; but he told me afterwards he laughed to see me laugh, which, in all the time we had been together, he hadn't seen. What made us laugh worse, was that the Mexicans were so startled that they seized their rifles and rushed to the doorway, and stood looking at us as if we were wild beasts. Keeping the guns pointed at us, they walked round very carefully, and felt our cords to see that they were all right; and finding they were, went back into the next room, savage and rather scared. Our laughing made them terribly uneasy, I could see; and they had an idea we couldn't have laughed like that, if we hadn't some idea of getting away. When we had done I said, "Now, Rube, tell me what you have planned out, that is, if you're downright in arnest." "In arnest!" says he, almost angry; "of course I'm in arnest. Do you think I'm going to be fool enough to stop here to be frizzled and sliced by that El Zeres to-morrow? No, it's just as I said: we must get our hands free; we must kill all these fellows, and be off." "But how are we to get our hands free, Rube?" "That's the only point I can't make out," he said. "If these fellows would leave us alone, it would be easy enough; we could gnaw through each other's thongs in ten minutes; but they won't let us do that. All the rest is easy enough. Just think it over, Seth."

I did think it over, but I did not see my way to getting rid of our thongs. That done, the rest was possible enough. If we could get hold of a couple of rifles and take them by surprise, so as to clear off four or five before they could get fairly on their legs, I had little doubt that we could manage the rest. No doubt they would shut the door as it got later, and it was possible that the row might not be heard. If that was managed, I was sure we could crawl through the lines, and get off. Yes, it was straightforward enough if we could but get rid of our cords. As I was thinking it over, my eye fell upon the pan of water. An idea came across me. "I don't know, Rube, that it would stretch them enough to slip our hands out, but if we could wet these hide thongs by dipping them in water, we might stretch them a bit, anyhow, and ease them." "That would be something, Seth, anyhow." We shuffled by turns next to the pan, and leant back so that our wrists were fairly in the water. The water relieved the pain, and I could feel the thongs give a little, but it was only a little; they had been tied too carefully and well to render it possible to unloose them. We came to this conclusion after an hour's straining, and at the cost of no little pain. We agreed it was no use, and sat thinking over what was the next thing to do, and taking it by turns to cool our wrists. We did not altogether give up hope, as we agreed that we must try, in the short intervals between the visits of the Mexicans, to untie the knots of each other's cords with our teeth. It was possible, anyhow, for the knots would draw pretty easy now that the leather was wet. Suddenly an idea struck me. I squeezed myself back to the wall, and leant against it. "It's all right, Rube," said I; "our cords are as good as off." "How's that?" said Rube. "This wall is made of rough stones, Rube, and there are plenty of sharp edges sticking out through the mud. They will cut through these wet thongs like knives." "Hoorah!" shouted Rube, at the top of his voice, with a yell that startled the Mexicans from their seats again, and then he commenced thundering out one of the songs the soldiers used to sing on the march. Several Mexicans came running up from the camp to ask if anything was the matter, Rube's yell having reached their ears. They were told it was only those mad Americanos amusing themselves; and with many angry threats of the different sort of yells we should give the next day, they sauntered off again.

"That's rather a good thing," Rube said to me, when he stopped making a noise. "If any sound of the little fight we are going to have here reaches the camp, they will put it down to us shouting for our amusement."

By this time it had become perfectly dark, and the guard lighted a fire in the middle of the room in which they sat. A pile of wood had been brought in for the purpose, and when the smoke had a little abated, the door was shut and barred. Every three or four minutes one of the men would take a lighted brand and come in to see that we were not near to each other, and that all was secure. "What time shall we begin, Seth?" Rube asked. "In another hour or so," I said; "by eight. They will be gambling and quarrelling round the fire by nine o'clock, and the talk, and the noise of the horses, will prevent them hearing anything here. We must not think of going out for two hours later, and even then they won't be all asleep; but we dare not put it off later, for El Zeres may come back earlier than he said he should, and if he does, it's all up with us. Let's arrange our plans for good," I said, "and then we can each sit up against a corner and pretend to go to sleep.

When I am going to cut my cord I will give a very little cough, and then you do the same when you are free. We had better do that before very long, for you will be a long time before you will get any feeling in your feet. Rub them as hard as you can; but you can't do that till you get the use of your hands. When you are quite ready, snore gently; I'll answer in the same way if I am ready. Then we will keep quiet till the fellow comes in again, and the moment he is gone let us both creep forward. Choose a time when the fire is burning low. You creep round your side of the room; I will keep mine, till we meet in the corner where the rifles are piled. We must then open the pans, and shake all the powder out, and, when that is done, each take hold of one by the barrel and hit. Do you quite understand and agree?" "Quite, Seth. Is there anything else?" "Yes," I said: "you take the door, I will take the corner where the arms are. We must try and keep them from coming within arm's reach to use their knives; but if either of us are hard pressed he must call, and the other must come to him." "All right, old hoss; I long to be at work." "So do I," I said. "And now don't let's have any more talk; shut your eyes, and keep quiet till I cough."

The men were engaged now in talking over the deeds in which they had been engaged, and so revolting and cold-blooded were the atrocities of which they boasted, that I longed for the time when Rube and I should fall upon them. In half-an-hour I gave the signal. I had picked out a sharp stone in a convenient position, and it was not a minute before I felt the coil of cords loosen with a sudden jerk, and knew that I was free. I found my hands were completely numbed, and it was a long time before I could restore the circulation. It must have been a good half-hour before Rube gave the signal that he had got the cords that bound his ankles loosened, as of course he could not begin at them until he had the free use of his hands. As I had anticipated, the visits of our guards were rather less frequent now that they believed us to be asleep. Fortunately, the din and talk in the next room was now loud and incessant, which enabled Rube to rub, and even stamp his feet a little. In half-an-hour I heard a snore, which I answered. The moment the next visit was over, I crawled to the door, and then, lying pretty nigh on my stomach, crept round to where the rifles were piled. The fire was burning low, and the guard were sitting so closely round it that the lower part of the room was in black shadow; so that, though I was looking out for Rube, I didn't see him till he was close enough to touch me. It was a delicate job opening all the pans, but we did it without making as much noise as would scare a deer, and then, each taking a rifle by the barrel, we were ready. Pedro was just telling a story of how he had forced an old man to say where his money was hid, and how, when he had told his secret, and the money was obtained, he had fastened him up and set the house alight—a story which was received with shouts of approving laughter. As he finished, down came the butt of Rube's rifle on his head with a squelch, which mine did the same on the head of the next man. For an instant there was a pause of astonishment, for no one knew exactly what had happened; then there was a wild yell of surprise and fear, as our rifles came down again with a crashing thud. All leapt to their feet, the man I aimed my next blow at rolling over, and just escaping it. Rube was more lucky, and just got his man as he was rising. "Hoorah! Seth," he shouted, "five down out of eleven."

We drew back now to our posts as agreed on, and the Mexicans, drawing their knives, made a rush forward. They ain't cowards, the Mexicans—I will say that for them; and when these fellows found they were caught like rats in a trap, they fought desperately. They knew there was no mercy to expect from Rube and me. They divided, and three came at each of us. Two went down as if they were shot, and I was just whirling my rifle for another blow, when I heard a crash, and then a shout from Rube, "Help, Seth!" I saw at once what had happened. Rube's rifle, as he was making a blow at a man, had struck a beam over his head, and the shock had made it fly from his hands across the room. In another moment the two Mexicans were upon him with their knives. He hit out wildly, but he got a gash across the forehead and another on the arm in a moment. I made two strides across the hut, and the Mexicans who were attacking me, instead of trying to prevent me, made a rush to the corner where their rifles were, which I had left unguarded. It was a fatal mistake. My gun came down crash

upon the head of one of Rube's assailants before he knew of my approach, and another minute did for the second. As I turned from him the remaining two Mexicans levelled at Rube, who had rushed across to pick up his gun, and myself, and gave a cry as the flints fell and there was no report. For a minute or two they fought desperately with the guns; but it was no use, and it was soon over, and we stood the masters of the hut, with eleven dead men round us. For they were dead every one, for we examined them. The stocks of our guns had broken with the first blow, and the rest had been given with the iron, and in no case had we to hit twice.

It was scarcely over when we heard several men come running up outside. "Is anything the matter, Pedro? We thought we heard a yell." "No, nothing," I said, imitating Pedro's gruff voice, which I felt sure they would not know through the door; "it's only these mad Americanos yelling." The men were apparently quite satisfied with the explanation, for in a minute or two we heard their voices receding, and then all became still. Presently we opened the door and looked out. Many of the fires had begun to burn low, but round others there was still a sound of laughing and singing. "Another hour," Rube said, "and they will all be asleep." We threw some more wood on the fire, took some tobacco and cigarette paper from the pocket of one of the Mexicans, and sat down to smoke comfortably. We were both plaguey anxious, and couldn't pretend we warn't, for at any moment that rascal El Zeres might arrive, and then it would be all up with us. At last we agreed that we could not stand it any longer, and made up our minds to go outside and sit down against the wall of the hut till it was safe to make a start, and then if we heard horses coming in the distance we could make a move at once. We each took a hat and cloak, a brace of pistols, and a rifle, and went out. There we sat for another hour, till the camp got quiet enough to make the attempt. Even then we could hear by the talking that many of the men were still awake, but we dared not wait any longer, for we calculated that it must be near eleven o'clock already. We chose a place where the fires had burned lowest, and where everything was quiet, and, crawling along upon the ground, we were soon down among the horses. We had been too long among the Indians to have a bit of fear about getting through these fellows; and, lying on our faces, we crawled along, sometimes almost touching them, for they lay very close together, but making no more noise than two big snakes.

A quarter of an hour of this and we were through them, and far enough out on the plain to be able to get up on to our feet and break into a long stride. Ten more minutes, and we broke into a run. There was no fear now of our steps being heard. "Done them, by thunder!" Rube said; "won't El Zeres curse!" We might have been a mile and a half from the camp, when in the quiet night air we heard the sound of the howl of a dog. We both stopped as if we were shot. "Thunder!" Rube exclaimed furiously, "if we haven't forgot the bloodhound." I knew what Rube meant, for it was a well-known matter of boast of El Zeres that no one could ever escape him, for that his bloodhound would track them to the end of the world. "There's only one thing to be done," I said; "we must go back and kill that critter." "Wait, Seth," Rube said; "we don't know where the brute is kept. He warn't up at the hut, and we might waste an hour in finding him, and when we did, he ain't a critter to be wiped out like a babby." "We must risk it, Rube," I said. "It's all up with us if he's once put on our track." Rube made no answer, and we turned towards the camp. We hadn't gone twenty yards, when Rube said, "Listen." I listened, and sure enough I could hear out on the plain ahead a low trampling. There was no need of any more talk. We ran forward as hard as we could go, turning a little out of our course to let the horsemen who were coming pass us. "In another quarter of an hour they'll know all about it, Rube. It will take them as much more to get ready and put the dog on the track. They'll have some trouble in getting him to take up our scent with all that blood in the room. I should say we may fairly reckon on three-quarters of an hour before they're well out of the camp." "That's about it," Rube said. "They will have to tie the dog, so as not to lose him in the darkness. They won't gain on us very fast for the next two hours; we can keep this up for that at a pinch. After that, if we don't strike water, we are done for." "We passed a stream yesterday, Rube; how far was it back?" "About an hour after daylight. Yes, nearly three hours from camp. But we are going faster now than we did then. We ought to do it in two hours." After this we didn't say any more. We wanted all our breath. It was well for us we had both been tramping half our lives, and that our legs had saved our necks more times than once on the prairies. We were both pretty confident we could run sixteen miles in two hours. But we dared not run straight. We knew that if they found we were keeping a line, they would let the dog go their best pace and gallop alongside; so we had to zigzag, sometimes going almost back upon our own track. We did not do this so often as we should have done if we had had more time.

We went by the stars. It was easier than it would have been by day, for when the sun's right overhead, it ain't a very straightforward matter to know how you are going; but there would be no difficulty then to scouts like Rube and me. Well, we had run, maybe, an hour and a quarter when we heard a faint, short bark far behind. "The brute is on our trail," Rube said; "they haven't given us so much start as I looked for. Another half-hour and he will be at our heels sure enough." I felt this was true, and felt very bad-like for a bit. In another quarter of an hour the bark was a good bit nearer, and we couldn't go no faster than we were going. All of a sudden I said to Rube, " Rube, I've heard them dogs lose their smell if they taste blood. Let's try it; it's our only chance. Here, give me a cut in the arm; I can spare it better than you can; you lost a lot to-night from that cut." We stopped a minute. I tore off the sleeve of my hunting shirt, and then Rube gave me a bit of a cut on the arm. I let the blood run till the sleeve was soaked and dripping, then Rube tore off a strip from his shirt and bandaged my arm up tight. We rolled the sleeve in a ball and threw it down, then took a turn, made a zigzag or two to puzzle the brute, and then went on our line again. For another ten minutes we could hear the barking get nearer and nearer, and then it stopped all of a sudden. On we went, and it was half-an-hour again before we heard it, and then it was a long way off. " I expect we're all right now, Seth," Rube said. " I guess we are," I said; " but the sooner we strike water, the better I shall be pleased." It was nigh another half-hour, and we were both pretty nigh done, when we came upon the stream, and the dog couldn't have been more than a mile off. It was a bit of a thing five or six yards wide, and a foot or two deep in the middle. " Which way ? " says Rube. " Up's our nearest way, so we had better go down." " No, no," says I; " they're sure to suspect that we shall try the wrong course to throw them off, so let's take the right." Without another word up stream we went, as hard as we could run. In a few minutes we heard the dog stop barking, when we might have been half-a-mile up stream. " We must get out of this, Rube," I said. " Whichever way they try with the dog, they are safe to send horsemen both ways." " Which side shall we get out, Seth ? " " It don't matter," I said; " it's all a chance which side they take the dog. Let's take our own side." Out we got; and we hadn't run a quarter of a mile before we heard a trampling of horses coming along by the stream. We stopped to listen, for we knew if they had the dog with them, and if he was on our side of the river, we were as good as dead. " If they take the trail, Seth," Rube said, " it's all up with us. Don't let's run any more. We are men enough to shoot the four first who come up, and I only hope one of them may be

El Zeres; that'll leave us a pistol each, and we will keep them for ourselves. Better do that, by a long way, than be pulled to pieces with hot pincers." "A long way, Rube," I said. "That's agreed, then. When I give the word, put the barrel against your eye and fire; that's a pretty safe shot."

As the Mexicans got to the place where we had got out, we stopped and held our breath. There was no pause—on they went; another minute, and we felt certain they had passed the spot. "Saved, by thunder!" Rube said; and we turned and went off at a steady trot that we could keep up for hours. "How long shall we get, do you think, Seth?" "That all depends how long they follow down stream. They can't tell how far we are ahead. I should think they will go two miles down; then they will cross the stream and come back; and if they don't happen to be on the right side of the stream as they pass where we got out, they will go up another two or three miles, and near as much down, before they strike the trail. We're pretty safe of half-an-hour's start, and we might get, if we're lucky, near an hour. We ain't safe yet, Rube, by a long way. It's near thirty miles from Pepita's to the camp. We've come sixteen of it good—eighteen, I should say; we have got another twelve to the road, and we ain't safe then. No, our only chance is to come across a haciénda and get horses. There are a good many scattered about; but it's so dark, we might pass within fifty yards and not see it. There won't be a streak of daylight till four, and it ain't two yet." "Not far off, Seth." By this time we had got our wind again, and quickened up into a fast swing; but our work had told on us, and we couldn't have gone much over seven miles an hour. Several times, as we went on, we could hear a trampling in the dark, and knew that we had scared some horses; but though we had a lasso we had brought with us, we might as well have tried to catch a bird with it. In an hour we heard the dog again, but it was a long way behind. There was nothing for it now but hard running, and we were still seven miles from the road, and even that didn't mean safety. I began to think we were going to lose the race, after all. In another quarter of an hour we stopped suddenly. "Thunder!" said Rube; "what's that?" Some animal, that had been lying down, got up just in front of us. "It's a horse! Your lasso, Rube!" Rube, however, had made a tremendous rush forward, and, before the animal could stretch himself into a gallop, had got close, and grasped him by the mane. "It's no go," Rube said, as the horse made a step forward ; "he's an old un, dead lame." "Don't leave go, Rube," I said. "He'll do for our turn." He was a miserable old beast, but I felt that he would do as well as the best horse in the world for us. Rube saw my meaning, and in a minute we were both astride on his back. He tottered, and I thought he'd have gone down on his head. Kicking wasn't of no good ; so I out with my knife and gave him a prod, and off we went. It weren't far, some two hundred yards or so, but it was the way I wanted him, right across the line we were going. Then down he tumbled. "All right," said I. "You've done your work, old man ; but you mustn't lay here, or they may light upon you and guess what's been up." So we lugged him on to his feet, gave him another prod, which sent him limping off ; and on we went on our course, sure that we were safe at last, for we had thrown the bloodhound altogether off our trail.

For a mile or so we kept right away from our course, for fear that they should keep straight on, and, missing the scent, lead the dog across the trail, and so pick it up again ; then we turned and made straight for the road. "I don't think, Rube," I said after a while, "that we shall strike the road far off where we left it at Pepita's." "No, I expect not, Seth. We had better bear a little more to the south, for they will most likely make for Pepita's, and day will soon be breaking now." "We'd better not strike the road at all, Rube ; likely enough, they will follow it down for a few miles in hopes of picking us up." "I hope they will," Rube said ; "and I expect so. Won't it be a lark, just ?" "What do you mean, Rube ?" "Mean ? Why, didn't the Cap tell us to leave San Miguel before daybreak, and to ride to meet him ? It warn't likely that he meant us to ride more than ten miles or so ; so that he will be within that distance of San Miguel by an hour after daybreak, and will be at Pepita's half-an-hour later. If them fellows ride on, they are safe to fall into as nice a trap as "— "Jehoshaphat !" said I. "You're right, Rube. Let's make tracks. It can't be more than another four or five miles to the road, and day will break in half-an-hour." "How strong do you reckon them, Seth ?" "Fifty or sixty," said I, " by the regular sound of the horses." " That's about what I guessed," Rube said. " There are forty of our chaps, and they will be fresh. We'll give 'em goss."

We had now long ceased to hear the baying of the dog, which had been most unpleasantly clear when we got off the old hoss that had done us such a good turn. We made sure, too, that we were well ahead, for they would likely wait an hour in trying to pick up the trail again. Daylight came at last; and when it was light enough to see, we stopped and took a look from a slight rise, and there, across the plain, we could see the road just where we expected. Nothing was moving upon it, nor, looking back, could we see any sign of the Mexicans. Away to the left, a mile or so, we could see a clump of trees, and something like the roof of a house among them. This, we had no doubt, was Pepita's. About a mile down the road the other way was a biggish wood, through which the road ran. " Let's make for that wood, Rube, and wait; the Cap will be up in another half-hour, and it ain't likely the Mexicans will be along much before that. They're likely to stop for a drink at Pepita's." In another ten minutes we were in shelter in the wood, taking care not to get upon the road, in case the Mexicans should come along with the hound before our men. We hadn't been there twenty minutes before we both heard a trampling of horses; but it was a minute or two more before we could decide which way they were coming. At last, to our great comfort, we found it was the right way. Just before they came up, I had an idea I caught a sound from the other way, but I couldn't have sworn to it. We lay till the troop came fairly up, as it might be another party of Mexicans; but it was all right, and we jumped out, with a cheer, into the middle of them. Mighty surprised they were to see us, on foot, and all dust and sweat. Rube's face, too, was tied up; and altogether we didn't look quite ourselves. They all began to talk at once; but I held up my hand urgent, and, when they saw it was something particular, they shut up, and I said to the Cap, " Don't ask no questions, Cap; I'll tell you all arterwards. El Zeres with about fifty of his men will be here in about three minutes, I reckon. They've ridden thirty miles, and the beasts ain't fresh; so it's your own fault if one gets away."

The Cap didn't waste a moment in words. He ordered half his men to ride back two hundred yards, and to charge when they heard his whistle; and he and the rest turned off into the wood, which was very thick, and screened 'em from any one passing. Rube and I, not having horses, were no good for a charge; so we went on in the wood, as near as we could guess, half-way between them, so as to be ready to jump out and join in the scrimmage. It all takes some time to tell, but it didn't take two minutes to do, and in another minute we could hear the Mexicans close. On they came: we knew now that they had passed the Cap, and we clutched our rifles tight and peered out through the leaves. On they came, and we could see El Zeres riding first, with the bloodhound trotting along by the side of his horse. Just as he was opposite, we heard a loud, shrill whistle, and the Mexicans halted with a look of uneasiness. They weren't left to wonder long, for in a moment there was a trampling of horses, and down came our fellows on both sides of them. Just before they got up we stepped forward with our rifles up. "El Zeres!" Rube shouted; and, startled as the Mexican was, he looked round. He had just time to see who it was, when Rube's ball hit him in the head, and down he went as dead as a stone. The hound turned and came right at us with a deep growl of rage. I sent a ball through his chest and rolled him over, and just as I did so our fellows came down upon the Mexicans. It was a fierce fight, for the Mexicans were in a trap, and knew that there was no mercy for them. Rube and I sprang out, and paid a good many of 'em off for the scare they had given us. We wiped them right out to the last man, losing only six ourselves. I don't know as ever I see a better scrimmage while it lasted.

After it was over, Rube and I mounted two of their horses, and rode on with the rest of them to San Miguel; but before we started off we told our story to the Cap, and he sent a couple of men back with a dispatch to the general, asking for five hundred men to destroy El Zeres' band at a blow. We stopped at Pepita's, and I never see a girl have a much worse scare than we gave her. She made sure it was El Zeres, and came running out to see if he had caught us; and when she found that she had fallen into the hands of the Rangers, and that we were among them, she was as white as a shirt in a minute. She was plucky enough, though; for as soon as she could get her tongue, she jawed us like a wild woman.

I expect she made sure we should have shot her for her treachery,—and a good many of our bands would have done so right on end,—but the Rangers never touched women. However, she warn't to go scot free; so we got fire, and set the house and stable in a blaze. As we rode off, Rube shouted out, "If you change your mind again about coming with me to Missouri, you just drop me a line, Pepita." I thought, as I looked at her, it was lucky for Rube she hadn't a rifle in her hand; she'd have shot him if she had been hung for it a minute afterwards.

We rode on to San Miguel, took Colonel Cabra prisoner, with his papers, and sent him back under an escort. At dusk the same day we got on our horses and rode back to where Pepita's house had stood, and where our captain expected the troops he had sent for. In half-an-hour they came up. They had a couple of hours to rest their horses, and then Rube and I led them straight to the Mexican camp. No doubt they heard us coming when we were close, but made sure it was El Zeres, and so didn't disturb themselves; and it warn't till we had wheeled round and fairly surrounded them that they smelt a rat. But it was too late then, for in another minute we were down upon them, and I don't believe twenty out of the whole lot got away. It was, altogether, one of the most successful businesses in the whole war. And I think that's about all the story.

From *Out on the Pampas*.

THE PUNISHMENT OF KHIPIL

By GEORGE MEREDITH

They relate that Shahpesh, the Persian, commanded the building of a palace, and Khipil was his builder. The work lingered from the first year of the reign of Shahpesh even to his fourth. One day Shahpesh went to the river-side where it stood, to inspect it. Khipil was sitting on a marble slab among the stones and blocks; round him stretched lazily the masons and stone-cutters and slaves of burden; and they with the curve of humorous enjoyment on their lips, for he was reciting to them adventures, interspersed with anecdotes and recitations and poetic instances, as was his wont. They were like pleased flocks whom the shepherd hath led to a pasture freshened with brooks, there to feed indolently; he, the shepherd, in the midst.

Now, the King said to him, " O Khipil, show me my palace where it standeth, for I desire to gratify my sight with its fairness."

Khipil abased himself before Shahpesh, and answered, " 'Tis even here, O King of the age, where thou delightest the earth with thy foot and the ear of thy slave with sweetness. Surely a site of vantage, one that dominateth earth, air, and water, which is the builder's first and chief requisition for a noble palace, a palace to fill foreign kings and sultans with the distraction of envy; and it is, O Sovereign of the time, a site, this site I have chosen, that will occupy the tongues of travellers and awaken the flights of poets!"

Shahpesh smiled and said, " The site is good! I laud the site! Likewise I laud the wisdom of Ebn Busrac, where he exclaims:

'Be sure, where Virtue faileth to appear,
For her a gorgeous mansion men will rear;
And day and night her praises will be heard,
Where never yet she spake a single word.'"

Then said he, "O Khipil, my builder, there was once a farm-servant that, having neglected in the seed-time to sow, took to singing the richness of his soil when it was harvest, in proof of which he displayed the abundance of weeds that coloured the land everywhere. Discover to me now the completeness of my halls and apartments, I pray thee, O Khipil, and be the excellence of thy construction made visible to me!"

Quoth Khipil, "To hear is to obey."

He conducted Shahpesh among the unfinished saloons and imperfect courts and roofless rooms, and by half-erected obelisks, and columns pierced and chipped, of the palace of his building. And he was bewildered at the words spoken by Shahpesh; but now the King exalted him, and admired the perfection of his craft, the greatness of his labour, the speediness of his construction, his assiduity; feigning not to behold his negligence.

Presently they went up winding balusters to a marble terrace, and the King said, "Such is thy devotion and constancy in toil, O Khipil, that thou shalt walk before me here."

He then commanded Khipil to precede him, and Khipil was heightened with the honour. When Khipil had paraded a short space he stopped quickly, and said to Shahpesh, "Here is, as it chanceth, a gap, O King! and we can go no further this way."

Shahpesh said, "All is perfect, and it is my will thou delay not to advance."

Khipil cried, "The gap is wide, O mighty King, and manifest, and it is an uncomplete part of thy palace."

Then said Shahpesh, "O Khipil, I see no distinction between one part and another; excellent are all parts in beauty and proportion, and there can be no part incomplete in this palace that occupieth the builder four years in its building: so advance, do my bidding."

Khipil yet hesitated, for the gap was of many strides, and at the bottom of the gap was a deep water, and he one that knew not the motion of swimming. But Shahpesh ordered his guard to point their arrows in the direction of Khipil, and Khipil stepped forward hurriedly, and fell in the gap, and was swallowed by the water below. When he rose the second time, succour reached him, and he was drawn

"KHIPIL STEPPED FORWARD HURRIEDLY, AND FELL IN THE GAP" to land trembling, his teeth chattering. And Shahpesh praised him, and said, " This is an apt contrivance for a bath, Khipil, O my builder! well conceived; one that taketh by surprise; and it shall be thy reward daily when much talking hath fatigued thee."

Then he bade Khipil lead him to the hall of state. And when they were there, Shahpesh said, " For a privilege, and as a mark of my approbation, I give thee permission to sit in the marble chair of yonder throne, even in my presence, O Khipil."

Khipil said, " Surely, O King, the chair is not yet executed."

And Shahpesh exclaimed, " If this be so, thou art but the length of thy measure on the ground, O talkative one!"

Khipil said, " Nay, 'tis not so, O King of splendours! Blind that I am! yonder's indeed the chair."

And Khipil feared the King, and went to the place where the chair should be, and bent his body in a sitting posture, eyeing the King, and made a pretence to sit in the chair of Shahpesh, as in conspiracy to amuse his master.

Then said Shahpesh, " For a token that I approve thy execution of the chair, thou shalt be honoured by remaining seated in it up to the hour of noon; but move thou to the right or to the left, showing thy soul insensible of the honour done thee, transfixed thou shalt be with twenty arrows and five."

The King then left him with a guard of twenty-five of his body-guard; and they stood around him with bent bows, so that Khipil dared not move from his sitting posture. And the masons and the people crowded to see Khipil sitting on his master's chair, for it became rumoured about. When they beheld him sitting upon nothing, and he trembling to stir for fear of the loosening of the arrows, they laughed so that they rolled upon the floor of the hall, and the echoes of laughter were a thousandfold. Surely the arrows of the guards swayed with the laughter that shook them.

Now, when the time had expired for his sitting in the chair, Shahpesh returned to him, and he was cramped, pitiable to see; and Shahpesh said, " Thou hast been exalted above men, O Khipil! for that thou didst execute for thy master has been found fitting for thee."

Then he bade Khipil lead the way to the noble gardens of dalliance and pleasure that he had planted and contrived. And Khipil went in that state described by the poet, when we go draggingly, with remonstrating members,

> "Knowing a dreadful strength behind,
> And a dark fate before."

They came to the gardens, and behold, these were full of weeds and nettles, the fountains dry, no tree to be seen—a desert. And Shahpesh cried, "This is indeed of admirable design, O Khipil! Feelest thou not the coolness of the fountains? their refreshingness? Truly! I am grateful to thee. And these flowers, pluck me now a handful, and tell me of their perfume."

Khipil plucked a handful of the nettles that were there in the place of flowers, and put his nose to them before Shahpesh, till his nose was reddened; and desire to rub it waxed in him, and possessed him, and became a passion, so that he could scarce refrain from rubbing it even in the King's presence. And the King encouraged him to sniff and enjoy their fragrance, repeating the poet's words:

> "Methinks I am a lover and a child,
> A little child and happy lover, both!
> When by the breath of flowers I am beguiled
> From sense of pain, and lulled in odorous sloth.
> So I adore them, that no mistress sweet
> Seems worthier of the love which they awake:
> In innocence and beauty more complete,
> Was never maiden cheek in morning lake.
> Oh, while I live, surround me with fresh flowers!
> Oh, when I die, then bury me in their bowers!"

And the King said, "What sayest thou, O my builder? that is a fair quotation, applicable to thy feelings, one that expresseth them?"

Khipil answered, "'Tis eloquent, O great King! comprehensiveness would be its portion, but that it alludeth not to the delight of chafing."

Then Shahpesh laughed and cried, "Chafe not! it is an ill thing and a hideous! This nosegay, O Khipil, it is for thee to present to thy mistress. Truly she will receive thee well after its presentation! I will have it now sent in thy name, with word that thou followest quickly. And for thy nettled nose, surely if the whim seize thee that thou desirest its chafing, to thy neighbour is permitted what to thy hand is refused."

The King set a guard upon Khipil to see that his orders were executed, and appointed a time for him to return to the gardens.

At the hour indicated, Khipil stood before Shahpesh again. He was pale, saddened; his tongue drooped like the tongue of a heavy bell, that when it soundeth giveth forth mournful sounds only; he had also the look of one battered with many beatings. So the King said, "How of the presentation of the flowers of thy culture, O Khipil?"

He answered, "Surely, O King, she received me with wrath, and I am shamed by her."

And the King said, "How of my clemency in the matter of the chafing?"

Khipil answered, "O King of splendours! I made petition to my neighbours whom I met, accosting them civilly and with imploring, for I ached to chafe, and it was the very raging thirst of desire to chafe that was mine, devouring eagerness for solace of chafing. And they chafed me, O King; yet not in those parts that throbbed for the chafing, but in those which abhorred it."

Then Shahpesh smiled, and said, "'Tis certain that the magnanimity of monarchs is as the rain that falleth, the sun that shineth; and in this spot it fertilizeth richness; in that encourageth rankness. So art thou but a weed, O Khipil! and my grace is thy chastisement."

Now, the King ceased not persecuting Khipil, under pretence of doing him honour and heaping favours on him. Three days and three nights was Khipil gasping without water, compelled to drink of the drought of the fountain, as an honour at the hands of the King. And he was seven days and seven nights made to stand with stretched arms, as they were the branches of a tree, in each hand a pomegranate. And Shahpesh brought the people of his court to regard the wondrous pomegranate-shoot planted by Khipil, very wondrous, and a new sort, worthy the gardens of a King. So the wisdom of the King was applauded, and men wotted he knew how to punish offences in coin, by the punishment inflicted on Khipil the builder. Before that time his affairs had languished and the currents of business instead of flowing had become stagnant pools. It was the fashion to do as did Khipil, and fancy the tongue a constructor rather than a commentator: and there is a doom upon that people and that man which runneth to seed in gabble, as the poet says in his wisdom:

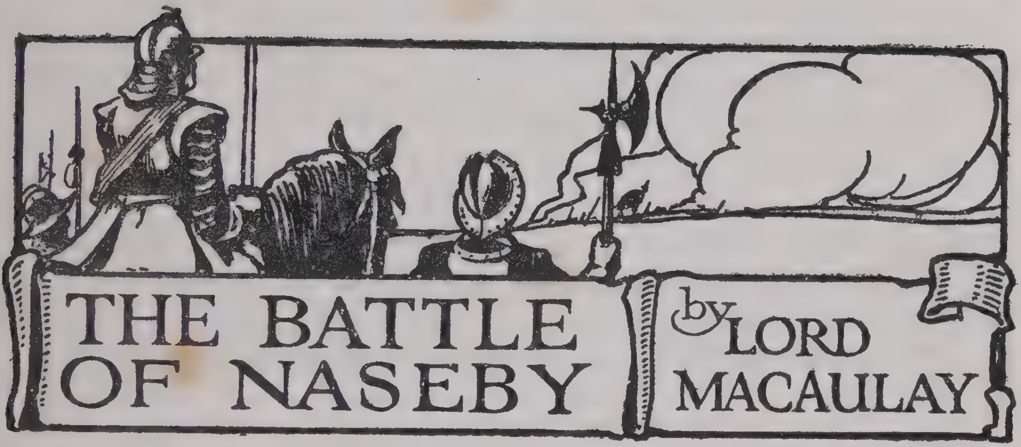
> "If thou would'st be famous and rich in splendid fruits,
> Leave to bloom the flower of things, and dig among the roots."

Truly after Khipil's punishment there were few in the dominions of Shahpesh who sought to win the honours bestowed by him on gabblers and idlers, as again the poet:

> "When to loquacious fools with patience rare
> I listen, I have thoughts of Khipil's chair:
> His bath, his nosegay, and his fount I see,—
> Himself stretched out as a pomegranate-tree.
> And that I am not Shahpesh I regret,
> So to enmesh the babbler in his net.
> Well is that wisdom worthy to be sung,
> Which raised the palace of the Wagging Tongue!"

And whoso is punished after the fashion of Shahpesh, the Persian, on Khipil the builder, is said to be one "in the Palace of the Wagging Tongue" to this time.

From *The Shaving of Shagpat.*



THE BATTLE OF NASEBY

by LORD MACAULAY

It was about the noon of a glorious day of June,
That we saw their banners dance, and their cuirasses shine,
And the Man of Blood was there, with his long essenced hair,
And Astley, and Sir Marmaduke, and Rupert of the Rhine.

Like a servant of the Lord, with his Bible and his sword,
The General rode along us to form us to the fight,
When a murmuring sound broke out, and swell'd into a shout,
Among the godless horsemen upon the tyrant's right.

And hark! like the roar of the billows on the shore,
The cry of battle rises along their charging line!
For God! for the Cause! for the Church! for the Laws!
For Charles, King of England, and Rupert of the Rhine!

THE BATTLE OF NASEBY

The furious German comes, with his clarions and his drums,
His bravoes of Alsatia, and pages of Whitehall;
They are bursting on our flanks. Grasp your pikes, close your ranks:
For Rupert never comes but to conquer or to fall.

They are here! They rush on! We are broken! We are gone!
Our left is borne before them like stubble on the blast.
O Lord, put forth Thy might! O Lord, defend the right!
Stand back to back, in God's name, and fight it to the last.

Stout Skippon hath a wound; the centre hath given ground:
Hark! Hark!—What means the trampling of horsemen on our rear?
Whose banner do I see, boys? 'Tis he, thank God, 'tis he, boys,
Bear up another minute: brave Oliver is here.

Their heads all stooping low, their points all in a row,
Like a whirlwind on the trees, like a deluge on the dykes,
Our cuirassiers have burst on the ranks of the accurst,
And at a shock have scattered the forest of his pikes. . . .

And she of the seven hills shall mourn her children's ills,
And tremble when she thinks on the edge of England's sword;
And the kings of earth in fear shall shudder when they hear
What the hand of God hath wrought for the Houses and the Word.

OUR TOY SYMPHONY

By MEREDITH FLETCHER

AUTHOR OF "THE PRETENDERS" ETC.

It was a pouring wet "half," I remember, at the beginning of the Easter term at Urlford, and the junior members of Campbell's house were all about at a "loose end," and grumbling and growling at the weather, when Morrison suddenly sang out, with a rapt look in his eyes—

"Let's get up a Toy Symphony, you chaps, for Mrs. Campbell's birthday! It's on Saturday, you know."

"A what?" we cried in chorus.

"A Toy Symphony," he repeated, with enthusiasm. "They had one at our place in the holidays, and it was prime."

"Is it one of those new-fangled 'do's' that wind up with a spread?" asked Wedderburn, whose thoughts mostly ran on jam-tarts and chocolate-creams.

"No, you greedy goat! It's a sort of—er—toy-band arrangement, you know, with trumpets and fiddles and a kettle-drum—and triangles—and oh!—a whole pile of jolly things."

"But we haven't got any trumpets and kettle-drums, you silly fathead!" I scoffed.

"I know," Morrison said excitedly; "but we've got one or two fiddles amongst us, haven't we?—and combs?—and one or two chaps that can whistle? And we can easy fake up a kettle-drum out of an empty biscuit-tin or something—can't we?"

"Rather!" chimed in Sammy, entering into the spirit of the thing. (Sammy was my chum, S. A. M. Lindsay, and my name was Billinghurst, generally shortened to Bill.) "You bet we can! And I'm your man for the kettle-drum!"

"But you'd have made a good nightingale, Sammy," Morrison demurred.

"Nightingale!" quoth my chum contemptuously. "Nightingale! Not much! The kettle-drum for me! Fire away, Morrison, and tell these other chaps what thingummy-jigs they've got to take on. This is going to be no end of a spree."

"Well—if that isn't cool!" I exclaimed. "You choose your own thingummy-jig——"

"Instrument, Bill," corrected Morrison, beginning to put on airs. "You're a cuckoo."

"A—*what?*" I shouted.

"A cuckoo!" Sammy bawled into my ear. "Are you getting a bit deaf, Bill?"

Morrison hurriedly explained that a "cuckoo" was one of the "instruments," and that he had chosen me for it simply out of compliment to my skill in imitating the bird in question.

"But you can be a quail, Bill, if you'd rather," he said soothingly; "or—or a nightingale."

"Thanks," I said shortly. "When I want you to tell me what I can be I'll let you know. If you think you're going to stuff your cuckoos, and quails, and nightingales down *my* throat you're jolly well mistaken. I saw this show myself once when I was a kid, and I'm going to be the conductor."

"But—er—I say," Morrison expostulated; "I was going to conduct myself."

"Well, you can't," was my emphatic response. "So it's no use making a fuss. Go ahead now, and tell these other fellows what you want 'em to be. If we do this thing at all we're going to do it properly; and there's none too much time. Wire in!"

And winking at Sammy, I shoved my hands into my pockets, and, lounging up against the wall, prepared to enjoy the fun.

Talk about a hullabaloo! Before many minutes were over Morrison couldn't hear himself speak; and above the din one of the combs kept shrieking insistently—

"What tu-u-ne have we to play, Morrison?—what tu-u-u-ne have we to play?"

Poor Morrison ran his fingers through his hair in a semi-dazed fashion. His lips moved, but the words were lost, of course, in the general clamour; and Sammy and I were obliged to exert ourselves and bang a few heads together before he was able to make himself heard.

"There's a proper tune really," he yelled when comparative peace had been restored; "only I can't remember exactly how it goes. So I thought we might as well do something we all know—something Scotch, you know, to please Mrs. C., and then wind up with 'The Campbells are Comin'.'"

Frenzied applause greeted this brilliant suggestion, for the Campbell juniors were patriotic to a man; and Morrison was thumped on the back with a vigour that brought the moisture to his eyes; though whether they were tears of pride, or merely of pain, I couldn't, for certain, say.

When the hubbub had subsided we settled down, at Morrison's request, to talk things over quietly; and, after a bit of wrangling and buffeting, two other airs were selected: "Bonnie Mary of Argyle" and "We'd Better Bide a Wee"—the first choice being Sammy's, and the second mine.

One of the "combs" said he didn't know "Bonnie Mary of Argyle."

So Sammy told him—quite gently—that it was time he did; and that he'd jolly well better not let him hear him say that again.

Then the "first violin" had the nerve to say that he'd never even heard of "We'd Better Bide a Wee."

I was about to reason with him when Shaw, the head of the house, yelled down the passage for me, and I had to go and hunt about in his study for some pen-nibs he had mislaid—just as if he couldn't have looked for them himself!

That was the worst of Shaw! He seemed to imagine that I had been sent to Urlford for no other purpose than to be at his beck and call all day long. And how to undeceive him without causing trouble was a problem which, up to that time, had remained unsolved.

By the time I unearthed the nibs, and tidied up the mess I had made looking for them, the "first violin" had disappeared, and the fags' room was turned into a sort of fourth-rate aviary.

Morrison, with an exalted expression on his face, was standing over Wedderburn, trying to teach him to do the " quail " ; little Jones was up in one corner " cuckooing " for all he was worth ; Fowler was in another making weird attempts at a nightingale's trill ; while Bennett had withdrawn himself from a little group chattering like magpies, and was twisting himself about, growing purple in the face, and making such uncanny noises that I thought the excitement must be turning his brain.

" What's up with Bennett ? " I demanded, in a voice that was bound to command instant attention. " Is he going off his dot ? "

" He's only practising the corn-crake, Bill," Morrison answered mildly.

" Great Scott ! D'ye mean to say you had a racket like that in your other symphony ? Well, we ain't going to have it in this one, anyway. Chuck it, Bennett—d'ye hear ? You can be a 'comb,' or a 'triangle' instead. Where's Sammy ? "

" He went out to look for a kettle-drum," some one meekly observed.

" Good business ! Now, if you chaps fetch your combs and fiddles—and find young Foster, and tell him to fetch *his*—we could be making a start. Wait a bit, though ! You'd perhaps better speak to Campbell about it first, Morrison—put it nicely, you know, and say it's to please Mrs. C., or Shaw might drop on us for kicking up a shine. S'pose you go and tackle him now."

Morrison had the hardihood to hesitate.

" But if you're going to conduct, Bill, couldn't you tackle him yourself ? "

" I *could*," was my bland retort ; " but I'm jolly well not going to ! Off you scoot ! "

Morrison went off like a lamb, and returned beaming.

" It's all serene, Bill ! Only we haven't to disturb the house practising."

" Right ! " I observed. " We'll practise in a minor key. Find young Foster, some of you. I've got an idea."

The " first violin " was dragged in dishevelled and rebellious, and persisted in disclaiming all knowledge of " We'd Better Bide a Wee." So I called upon Morrison to whistle over the air.

Morrison went rather red, and said it was a funny thing, but it seemed to have gone clean out of his head, somehow.

"And you and Foster have the cheek to call yourselves musical!" I said disdainfully. "You ought to be kicked out of the choir. I'll bet little Jones knows it!" And I nodded encouragingly towards the smallest member of the house.

Little Jones blushed and sniggered, whistled a bar or two, broke down, and then, turning his back on us, went manfully through the air.

"There you are!" I exclaimed triumphantly. "Ain't you musical chaps jolly well ashamed of yourselves?"

"But that isn't 'We'd Better Bide a Wee,'" Morrison protested. "It's 'Annie Laurie.'"

He was backed up by Foster and two or three of the others, and a heated discussion was in full swing when Sammy appeared with his patent kettle-drum.

My chum was instantly appealed to, and little Jones was coerced into whistling the tune again; through sheer nervousness, however, he took it at such a rate, and in such a quaint, jerky style, that Sammy vowed it sounded, to him, more like a hornpipe, or a Scotch reel, than anything else.

"If you're so keen on 'We'd Better Bide a Wee' as all that, Bill," he remarked airily, "why on earth can't you show 'em how it goes yourself?"

Now Sammy was perfectly aware of my inability to either whistle or hum the most simple air correctly—I had not been endowed with a musical soul!—so that this was pure aggravation on his part; and, glowering in his direction, I muttered dark threats about punching his head.

But he only laughed; and beating a preliminary tattoo on the biscuit-tin he had managed to abstract from somewhere, he began to sing in a clear voice—he took the treble solos in the choir—the melody he had chosen himself—"Bonnie Mary of Argyle."

In vain I ordered him to stop that sentimental rot and give us the first verse of "We'd Better Bide a Wee."

He turned a deaf ear to my injunction, and avowed his intention of keeping on singing till all the combs and fiddles knew *his* tune by heart.

Determined not to be beaten, I pounced upon Morrison and forced him to accompany me on a systematic search for Dashwood, a good-natured Fifth Former who was said to know more about music than any one else in the house.

We found him in a study with three or four other fellows, and he looked rather surprised when I urged him to step outside, and then requested him, in an eager undertone, to whistle the first few bars of "We'd Better Bide a Wee."

However, he was affable enough about it when I hurriedly explained the circumstances, and good-humouredly whistled the whole thing, slowly and softly, so that his friends inside the room would not overhear.

Thanking the obliging senior, I rushed Morrison back to our own quarters while the melody was still fresh in his mind. And what do you think he had the face to tell me as soon as he got his breath? That it was "Kathleen Mavourneen" Dashwood had been whistling—an IRISH air, and not the one I asked for at all! I felt so savage at this shameless attempt to gull me on the part of the affable Fifth Former, that in order to calm me down and make the place worth living in, Sammy was obliged to soulfully warble "We'd Better Bide a Wee" quite of his own accord. Morrison recognized it at once, so I knew it must be the real thing this time, and harmony was restored.

Young Foster was a bit of a genius with the fiddle, and could pick up a tune without a mistake after hearing it a time or two; and as I impressed it upon him that it would be well worth his while to pick up the one I had chosen, and Morrison undertook to coach the other fiddles and combs, there seemed every prospect of our symphony being a huge success.

The first practice went rather well—on the whole. We put it off until the following day, so that no one could say that they hadn't had time to get the tunes up properly.

Sammy was the only one who didn't put in an appearance at the appointed time, and we had to make a start without the drum.

Cricket-stump in hand, I jumped on to the table and flourished my baton after the manner of our pompous and energetic little music-master.

"Fire away, Foster!" I sang out impatiently, when I thought the fiddles had been fooling about quite long enough with their strings. "Kick off, and give 'em the lead! We'll take 'We'd Better Bide a Wee' first. Most of the chaps are out, but we'd better do it sort o' vochy—old C. might be correcting exs. or something in his study, you know! Morrison, you and Bennett can be 'triangles,' and yell 'ting, ting!'—not too loud—and we're not going to have any of that corn-crake racket, remember."

"All right, Bill! When have we to come in?" Morrison asked in an innocent sort of way that made me feel, somehow, that he was laughing at me up his sleeve.

"You'll come in," I said, with a frown, "when *I* give you the tip—and not before—or you'll get this stump at your head."

This threat made them all very anxious to come in at the right time. They saw that I didn't mean to stand any nonsense, and every eye was fixed intently upon my baton, and every elbow was half-raised ready to dodge it if it came their way.

I let fly once at Morrison—he kept giving flickering little grins every now and again as though he saw something funny in the dignified passes I was making with the cricket-stump in the air—but it missed him by a hair's-breadth, and caught Foster on the funny-bone.

The "first violin" stamped and danced and spluttered, and said a lot of things I wouldn't care to repeat, and vowed that I'd broken his arm, and that he'd never be able to play the fiddle again.

I was trying to soothe him, and had even gone the length of promising to lend him my bike the next afternoon, when Sammy burst in, waving a mysterious-looking parcel above his head.

My chum seemed rather warm, and explained, jubilantly, that he had been down town without leave, dodged a couple of monitors, and got a kid's drum at the toy-shop, on tick, and a sixpenny trumpet for Morrison, so that we could do the thing in style.

I began to wish, then, that I hadn't made quite such a point of conducting the show. That little trumpet, with its war-like blare, had a fascination all its own. I watched Morrison enviously for a few moments, and then, snatching it out of his hands, put it to my own lips and blew a stirring blast.

"You can't blow for nuts, Morrison!" I cried scornfully. "Here!

—catch hold of the old 'baton'! I'm going to be the trumpeter. You can conduct instead of me."

Saturday evening arrived, and the house, almost to a man, swarmed into the dining-room to see us make "rather extra big asses of ourselves," as one or two of the big chaps went quite out of their way to explain.

Even Shaw deigned to honour us with his presence. Strolling in, the great man hovered about the doorway until the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Campbell and "Mary," and then, with easy assurance, calmly seated himself by the side of our house-master's charming sister, who had lately returned from a finishing school in Germany, and had taken all hearts at Urlford by storm.

Sammy and I exchanged moody glances. Shaw was undoubtedly a rival to be feared. He seemed to have a particularly taking way with him in the society of the fair one.

It was pitiable to think that she didn't know what a tyrant he could be when he chose.

My chum and I had had the great good fortune to render a trifling service to the young lady soon after her arrival. She had lost a small trinket off her gold bangle, and, as we were the lucky finders, we had been admitted at once into her good graces, and were looked upon as her especial cavaliers. It was more than maddening, therefore, to see Shaw monopolizing her whole attention in such a barefaced manner.

Grinding my teeth, I tried to console myself by the reflection that in a few short moments the tables would be turned—for the fiddles were tuning up, and the combs were trying over snatches in a minor key.

Mrs. Campbell—who was the most popular of all the masters' wives at Urlford—beamed with pleasure at our novel attempt to celebrate her natal day ; and even old C. looked a shade less stern than usual, and surveyed us with something very like a twinkle in his eye as we took our seats, and an expectant hush fell over the room.

In order to raise ourselves above the level of the audience, we hit upon the bright idea of sitting upon the backs of our chairs, with our feet upon the seats to preserve the balance.

Morrison, being the conductor, was perched in state upon a rather rickety three-legged stool, which threatened to let him down at any moment.

Amid breathless excitement he waved the cricket-stump ; Foster raised his bow ; little Jones, in his excessive anxiety to come in on the first beat, came in before it, and a piercing "cuck-oo-oo !" rent the air.

The audience looked rather startled for the moment, and half-inclined to give way to mirth.

But Morrison signalled hurriedly to Foster, and, rising gallantly to the occasion, the "first violin" scraped into the opening bars of "We'd Better Bide a Wee."

I stole a triumphant, sidelong glance at Sammy, and, raising my trumpet, prepared to blow a plaintive blast.

Earlier in the day I had intimated to Foster that, unless the symphony opened with the air I had chosen, there would be trouble. He demurred a bit at first, and muttered something about Sammy having said exactly the same sort of thing with regard to *his* choice.

But, after a few lurid threats, I managed to wring from him a reluctant promise that "Bonnie Mary of Argyle" should take second place.

To my surprise, Sammy didn't look one whit disturbed, but went on banging away at his old kettle-drum with a zest and unconcern that robbed me of half the sweets of my victory.

There was even a subtle air of levity about him that didn't seem to me to be at all in keeping with the touching strains of "We'd Better Bide a Wee."

"Don't go so fast, you silly fathead!" I growled to Foster, who was on my right; and as he abruptly slackened speed—to the no small confusion of the other fiddles and combs, not to speak of the conductor—I blew a succession of tender blasts, and turned a soulful gaze upon "Mary."

She looked more puzzled than anything else; and although I continued to regard her fixedly, she didn't seem to catch my meaning, but, with a pretty little air of perplexity, turned at last to Shaw, and appeared to be consulting him about the matter.

That high and mighty individual stared at me hard, and then shook his head, as though he couldn't for the life of him make out what in the world I was driving at; and, as my steadfast gaze grew more and more reproachful, they both began to laugh, half-hysterically, and "Mary" actually had to dab her eyes with a little bit of filmy, lacy stuff that seemed to serve the purpose of a handkerchief.

Something in their behaviour sent a sudden, dark misgiving darting through my mind. Had young Foster dared to play me false, and substitute another tune for "We'd Better Bide a Wee"?

I looked round suspiciously.

But the "first violin" was gazing dreamily at the conductor, his whole soul, apparently, in the melody he was drawing from his instrument.

I glanced quickly at Morrison.

But that artless youth carefully avoided my eye, and went on beating time energetically with his cricket-stump, and gesticulating to the abashed little cuckoo, who was too paralysed by his recent fiasco to come in again at the proper place.

Sammy's face, of course, expressed nothing but a childlike wonder when I glared at him with a questioning aspect; although, a moment or two before, his features had been convulsed.

The nightingale and one or two of the combs looked a trifle scared when I glowered in their direction; but that might mean anything or nothing, and before I could decide whether or no there was trickery afloat, Morrison gave the signal for the change of tune.

There was a gradual lull around me. A weird pause. And then Foster glided softly into "Bonnie Mary of Argyle."

At the same moment Sammy's voice rang out high and clear—

> "I have heard the mavis singing . . ."

The other fiddles and combs joined in very, very softly—so softly that you could scarcely hear them; and at the end of the first verse the audience broke into a storm of applause, and "Mary" was gazing at my chum with parted lips, and eyes all aglow with admiration.

It was a big score for Sammy!

I was so taken aback—for I thought *singing* was barred in a toy symphony—that I hadn't even the presence of mind to blow a single blast all through the song.

The last verse was encored over and over again. Sammy bowed and smirked right and left, and the fiddles and combs looked as pleased as Punch; and when Morrison gave the signal for "The Campbells are

Comin',” and little Jones suddenly roused up from his torpor and let out another ear-splitting “cuckoo-oo-oo” that threatened to upset the general gravity, and nearly sent Dashwood and his cronies into fits, they saved the situation by blaring away at the famous old air for all they were worth.

Inspired by their example, Sammy bottled up his rising hilarity and pounded away on the kettle-drum for dear life; the nightingale trilled like mad; the quail shrieked; the triangles yelled “ting, ting!” at the tip-top of their lungs; the cuckoo nearly broke a blood-vessel; and, not to be outdone, I clapped the trumpet to my lips and blew a volley of frenzied blasts.

In less than no time the fellows were all beating time with their feet, and uttering whoops of appreciation and delight.

“Give it beans!” they yelled ecstatically. “Give it be-e-eans!”

Old C.'s face was a picture. Mrs. C.'s was wreathed in smiles, and “Mary's” eyes were shining like stars as she swayed her head gracefully in time to the music.

Our enthusiastic conductor was throwing himself about, and urging us on to a sort of grand finale, when the long-suffering stool suddenly collapsed and precipitated him right on top of the nightingale. The nightingale fell back against one of the combs. The comb clutched frantically at the quail, and one of the triangles; they, in their turn, grabbed their nearest neighbours, and in another moment most of the performers had overbalanced, and were struggling about all jumbled up together in a grotesque confusion that simply brought down the house.

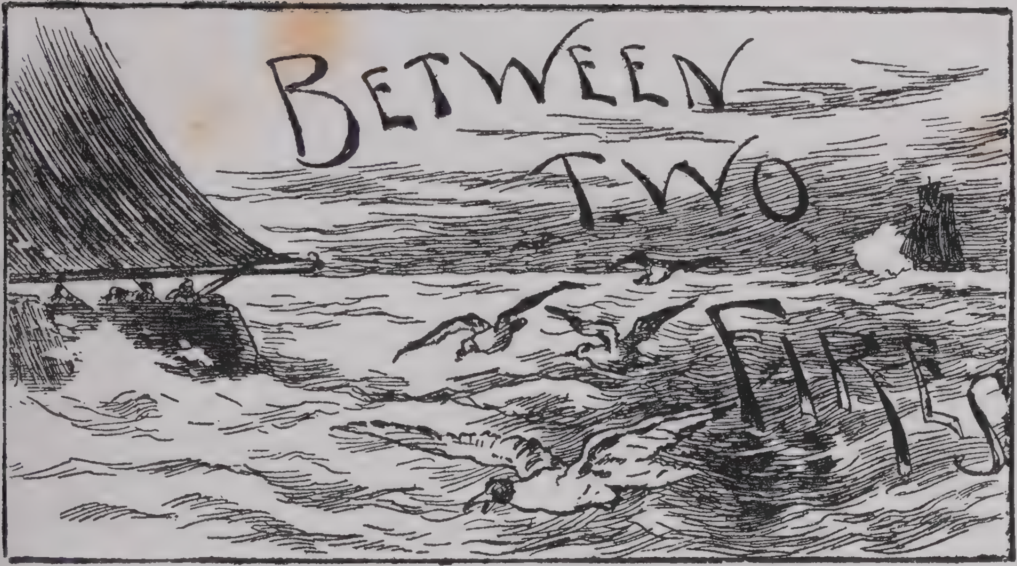
Old C. laughed till the tears ran down his face. So did Mrs. Campbell and “Mary”; and the latter confided to me afterwards that she had never enjoyed anything so much in her life.

“But, tell me, Bill, what made you stare at me so oddly all the while you were playing ‘Caller Herrin’’?” she queried in the next breath.

“‘*Caller Herrin’*’*?*” I gasped.

“Yes,” she smiled, “‘Caller Herrin’’! I couldn't think whatever in the world you meant!”

I recalled my soulful glances! . . . I thought of those tender blasts! . . . And then I bolted off to look for the one who had played me false.



BETWEEN TWO FIRES

By A. C. CURTIS

AUTHOR OF "THE GOOD SWORD BELGARDE"

THE off-shore wind was not able to raise a heavy sea, but it swept over the grey wetness of the Channel, cutting the tops off the waves and mingling their spray with cold drifts of rain. In fact, it was what some people would call " nasty weather," but Young Bill Swingle would not be numbered with such folk. He was thoroughly enjoying himself, as he steered the sloop *Nancy* close to a two-reef breeze. His enjoyment was not lessened by the fact that in the *Nancy's* hold was the finest cargo of contraband stuff that even his father, Old Bill Swingle, had ever stowed under hatches.

Old Bill stood on the deck, clad in oilskins, keeping a watchful eye on his son's seamanship. " Keep her sailing, boy, keep her sailing," he would say when an extra heavy gust might make a nervous or untried hand give way to the blast. He knew, none better, what his tight little craft was capable of, and he loved to sail, gunwale awash, as they were doing, making a passage homewards.

Those of the *Nancy's* crew who were on deck were crouched under the weather bulwarks, for in spite of humouring her when an extra heavy sea appeared, the deck was running wet with the lashing rain and spray.

Presently Old Bill went forward to speak with his mate, and as the two stood by the main hatch Young Bill saw a nice crested grey and green wave approaching, which looked to him an extra special sort of wave; there was a sense of purpose about it that appealed to him, and a wicked grin spread over his face. Ever so slightly did he pull the tiller up, and ever so slightly did the *Nancy* present her broadside more fully to the oncomer. The wave took them just abaft the main channels, and in an instant sent a few playful bucketfuls of salt water souse on to the deck. With his oilskins dripping from head to foot Old Bill shook his fist at his son, whose face wore an aspect of pleased innocence that would have done justice to a Sunday school. " I shall get beans for that," said he to himself, " but it was worth it."

" Drat that boy, I'll give him summat to warm his jacket," said Old Bill, wiping the moisture from his face.

" He didn't go for to do it, skipper," said the mate, a staunch friend of the boy's.

" I thought ye taught him to steer, Thomas? I've heerd ye say so a score of times," replied Old Bill, with the air of a man who has made a point. As he spoke he picked up a likely rope's-end that lay handy.

" 'Tis dirty weather, cap'n," said Thomas, ignoring the innuendo on his capacity of teacher, " and I wishes we could see a bit furder. Sea's goin' down and the wind's arising, we're gettin' under the land."

" Ten mile off yet, Thomas. This weather will give old Jack Hammer the rheumatiz; he'll be abed."

" The better for we, if that rat Nixon ain't about. 'Tis clearing to wind'ard, we shall soon see where we are. Where are ye going to? "

" To give Young Bill his due," replied that youth's sire grimly, as he moved aft.

" Steady, skipper, see that? " said Thomas, and there was a ring in his voice that made Bill Swingle turn and look in the direction to which his mate pointed.

" Jiminy! " said the skipper of the *Nancy*, as he gazed. " If that ain't too bad of Jack. It's the *Tiger*, sure enough."

Now the *Tiger* was a remarkably smart revenue cutter, and the last craft on all the coast that the *Nancy* wished to meet while she had her present cargo on board.

" 'Bout ship," roared Old Bill. "Slack away the sheets there, look lively, boys, Jack Hammer is on the war-path with a vengeance. Yet I didn't think he'd ha' done it, wi'out givin' me a wink," he murmured to himself.

Lest it may be thought extraordinary that the captain of the smuggler should feel aggrieved at the action of the preventive officer, it is necessary to explain that the two were lifelong friends. Together had they gone bird's-nesting in the old days, together robbed orchards, and together been flogged; but an irony of fate had put one into the King's service and made the other the smartest free trader on all the coast.

Even now Hammer had not willingly failed his friend, but had been forced by circumstances over which he had no control to take action. It must not be supposed that he had neglected the public service on account of his private friendship, not a bit of it; many a cargo of Swingle's had he taken, and many a deep-sea word wrung from the smuggler's lips; but somehow, while taking goods he had missed the men.

This discrepancy between goods captured and smugglers at large had been brought to the notice of authority by Simon Nixon, Hammer's subordinate and rival, and now he had no option but to act.

So the *Nancy* swept round in her wake and fled down the wind. Those on board of her hoped that, by some lucky chance, the crew of the *Tiger* had failed to make them out, and as the rain swept down again they hoped against hope that they might still escape undetected.

All thought of chastising Young Bill for his escapade had gone from his father's mind, as he stood peering out to windward watching for any sign of the revenue cutter. Thomas the mate took the tiller and Young Bill stood unafraid by his father, watching with him. It would be hard luck, thought he, if on this first voyage of his in the *Nancy* she should come to grief with the preventive men.

"Do you see aught, youngster?" said Old Bill, puckering up his brows as the rain beat down on them.

" Caught a glim of their sails, dad. Will Jack Hammer catch us, do you think ? "

" Not if he can help it, not if I can help it either. I fancy we may slip 'em in the dark, come night."

They shook out a reef, and the *Nancy*, under all the canvas she could carry, went through the seas like a racer. When the rain passed and gave them a clear view they saw the *Tiger* far astern, but still following in their wake.

" We have the heels of them," said Young Bill joyfully. " Let's steer again, Thomas; I've never steered her before such a jolly wind as this."

" Not this time, Young Bill; the less you steers just now the less likely is your dad to think of you and rope's-ends in the same connection; you was a bit too handy with that there wave."

Young Bill laughed. " Caught you both just proper," he said impenitently.

" Your dad'll catch you just proper, if you ain't careful," said the old chap, gazing steadily ahead as he met the wild plunges of the flying craft with a ready hand. " Hallo ! " he said, as if astonished, then shouted, " Sail right ahead ! "

Instantly every eye of the *Nancy's* crew was turned in the new direction, and the skipper holding on to the weather shrouds looked long and steadily. Presently he came aft, and his son could see by the expression of his face that what he had seen gave him considerable uneasiness.

" What is she, Thomas ? Did ye make her out ? " asked Old Bill.

" Not for sartin, skipper. Thought she were a schooner; but there, I only glimpsed her, as you might say."

" She ain't no schooner, mate," said Swingle. " I wish she were. Did you tell me that *Le Coq Rouge* has a patch in her mizzen ? Yonder's a French-built lugger, by the cut of her jib, and if she ain't the *Red Cock*, she's her twin sister. Give me the hellum, go forrard and tell me what ye see."

Presently Thomas came aft again with a face as grave as Old Bill's. " She's *Le Coq Rouge*, right enough, Bill," said he. " And what's worse, she's waiting for us head to the wind."

"Haul aft!" shouted the skipper of the *Nancy*. "Lively, boys, we've old Jack Hammer to wind'ard of us, and down to looard the wickedest privateer as ever sailed out of Sn'Malo."

Bill Swingle was right, *Le Coq Rouge* was the most noted of all the swarm of mosquito craft that preyed on the British merchantmen during the war. Heavily armed, heavily manned and swiftest of all craft sailing from the ports of northern France, she had more than once beaten off even sloops of war that had tried to capture her.

As the *Nancy* brought the wind abeam, and flew off at a right angle with her former course, the Frenchman's sails filled and she too gathered way on a course that would cross that of the smuggler.

"Will she stand it, Bill?" said Thomas anxiously, as he looked aloft at the straining gear and the sails, hard as boards with the weight of the wind. "Will she stand that extry reef, as we've shook out?"

"Stand it? She must stand it," was the almost savage reply. But even Bill Swingle cast many an anxious glance into the eye of the wind, for even he had never pressed his good craft so hard, and never had he harder need. The *Nancy* was threshing through the seas, her weather rigging singing shrill as harp strings in the wind, the dull roar of it in her mainsail, under her forefoot a smother of yeasty foam, and her lee scuppers running with the green water that broke over her. While down to leeward, but ever creeping up to them, the privateer sailed like a veritable witch of the seas.

A puff of smoke broke from the Frenchman's side, a cannon shot knocked the crest of a wave into the air some two hundred yards away, and the dull boom of the gun came to them muffled by the wind.

"She means business," said Thomas, eyeing his skipper, who felt the question that his mate left unsaid.

"Aye, she do; but so do I. For'ard there, cutlasses and muskets, clear away the gun."

It may easily be imagined that Young Bill was undergoing a variety of sensations, but he always said in after years that what he chiefly thought of as he scuttled below to stick the poker into the galley fire, was that whatever happened this bit of excitement would prevent his father remembering his little feat while steering, and so save him a licking. He didn't remember the sort of man his father was.

When Young Bill came on deck again, red-hot poker in hand, Thomas was steering and his father was stooping over the little six-pounder amidships. Signalling with his hand to the mate to alter course slightly, Old Bill shouted, " Steady, Thomas! keep her so." He saw his son, with the tail of his eye, standing ready, and when he got what he considered a satisfactory sight, " Fire ! " said he.

Young Bill applied the hot poker to the touch-hole, there was a prodigious bang, a cloud of smoke blown to leeward, and they had the mortification to see their shot fall far short of the enemy and skip from wave to wave till it found its billet in the sea.

" No good," said Old Bill, shaking his head. As he spoke the privateer fired again, and this time a cloud of splinters flew from their bulwarks, and the *Nancy* shivered from the blow.

" Got us that time, any one hurt ? " called out Swingle, looking round the deck.

" Naught to speak on," said a rough old smuggler, wiping the blood from his face, grazed by a flying splinter. " Run us aboard of him, cap'n, and us'll show him what for."

" I say, dad, why shouldn't we hand him over to Jack Hammer ? " said Young Bill shrewdly enough.

The older man smiled slowly. " Yes," he said, " I'll let ye off that rope's-ending for that, young 'un. Jack would a dozen times rather tackle the French than us, I'll be bound. Bring her closer to the wind, Thomas. Haul on the jib-sheet, for'ard there. Bear a hand, boy, aft with the main-sheet, tail on to it, put your weight into it, now ! " So saying, Old Bill, aided by his son and three of the *Nancy's* crew, hauled the main-sheet in and made it fast.

Though the *Nancy* sailed much more easily now that she was closer to the wind, yet it was soon evident that the French lugger could beat her on this point of sailing, and she came up fast. The rain squalls had followed each other in furious succession, and it was a long time since they had seen anything of the *Tiger*. Shut into a tiny circle by the driving rain even the privateer could at times be only dimly distinguished, though she was within cannon shot of them, as she every now and then reminded them in an unpleasant way. As a shot fell alongside, so near indeed as to throw a fountain of water over the deck, Old Bill turned to Thomas with a worried look on his face. "I only hope," said he, "as Jack Hammer hasn't missed us; if he has, we're done, and that's a fact."

"She is gaining on us fast," said the mate, with a glance over his shoulder. "Will ye fight her, Bill?"

"It'll be the last fight for most of us," said Old Bill. "How many men does the *Red Cock* carry?"

"No good, no good, cap'n. She carries a crew of fifty men, I'm told," said Thomas gloomily.

Swingle knew that this was true, and gritted his teeth at the knowledge. What good could his dozen men do against such odds? It would be mere butchery; besides, there was the boy aboard. As he meditated, the Frenchman yawed again and fired a shot which crashed into the *Nancy's* counter.

The sailors began to fidget and look at their commander. This was no warship, and they did not hesitate to speak their minds; most of them indeed had a personal share either in the ship or her cargo.

"No good, Bill Swingle." "Give it up, cap'n." "Heave to, it's our only chance." Words like these began to be heard, and Bill felt that the game was up. He turned towards the Frenchman and shook his fist with a gesture of savage rage, and was about to order Thomas to throw her into the wind, indeed the old fellow had already begun to push the tiller down, when a shrill cry from Young Bill stopped him.

"Ship ahoy!" shouted the boy, in an ecstasy of delight.

A sudden gleam of sun shone through the clouds, the last squall seemed to have blown the rain away, and there, a bare mile to windward, with the sun gleaming on her sails, came the *Tiger*, surging down the wind. It may easily be imagined with what joy Young Bill watched the English cutter rise and fall as she crossed the crested seas, marked the thunderous burst of foam under her bows as she plunged into the trough, and the gleam of her copper as her eager bowsprit rose towards the clearing sky.

" Hurrah, boys," shouted Old Bill, " we won't go to France arter all. There's Jack Hammer to wind'ard coming up like great guns."

" Fust time as we've ever been glad to see old Jack Hammer," growled a sailor, with a chuckle.

" Aye, and pretty near the last time too, I'll be bund," said another. " See there, the mossoos don't like it either."

" The *Red Cock* is going about, let's stop her, dad ! " cried Young Bill, keen to see a fight, and to take a hand in it if he might.

" Stop her we must, or Jack Hammer will take us instead of her," said Bill Swingle. " Slew that gun round. Keep her just sailing, Thomas. Quick, lads."

These smugglers were Englishmen, and the humour of bearing a hand in help of their legal enemy, the coastguard, appealed to them, so that it was with a jovial alacrity that they obeyed the skipper's orders. Watching Old Bill, Thomas handled the tiller with a master's touch. As the lugger's masts showed in line, the little cannon spoke again, and the Frenchman's mizzen-sail came down with a run, the boom lying broken across her deck, and the canvas bagging away to leeward all awash in the sea.

A cheer came down the wind from the *Tiger*, a token of thanks to the smugglers for their bold move, and as the revenue cutter swept past the stern of the *Nancy*, " Good luck ! " shouted Jack Hammer to the man he had been hunting, while Old Bill and his crew gave their countrymen a hearty cheer.

A heavy interchange of shots began between the *Tiger* and her opponent as she ranged up with her, but it was soon evident that the Frenchman's guns were of heavier metal than any carried by the King's ship.

" This won't do, not at all," muttered Old Bill, as he anxiously watched the fight.

" Jack Hammer means to board her," shouted a sailor. As the man spoke they saw the English ship alter her course and drive straight for the enemy's bows.

" Old Jack don't know that she carries a score more men than he do,"

"The little cannon spoke again, and the Frenchman's mizzen-sail came down with a run."

said Thomas, with a chuckle. "Let us slip in and land the stuff while they are taking the old chap off to France, eh, skipper?"

Old Bill said nothing to this, but Thomas wished that he had kept his teeth shut, for the skipper gave him a glance that near made him wish himself overboard. Then Swingle gripped the lee rail and fixed all his attention on the fight.

"Jack Hammer in prison? Old Jack taken by the French?" said he at last, turning round, "not if I can stop it. Slack away the sheets! Up with your hellum, Thomas! Stand by to board, boys; we'll not leave Jack Hammer in the lurch."

"Here's a lark, Eddard," said one sailor to another. "Blowed if the skipper ain't agoing to rescue the exciseman."

The two opponents were now at grips, the smoke from their guns mingled in one cloud; soon even the guns ceased, for the ships were locked, grinding side to side, and now it was a matter for cold steel and sheer weight of numbers.

As the *Nancy* neared the fray Young Bill, who had never before seen men striving for each other's lives, saw with a strange fascination the swarm of figures pouring from the *Tiger's* rigging into the Frenchman. He heard the yells of the combatants, the report of pistols, nay, the very groans of the wounded.

So near were they now to the combat that they could see and distinguish the very figures of the men. They saw Jack Hammer borne back fighting, then they saw him by desperate efforts dash forward and rescue one of his men, who was isolated and fighting single-handed with a knot of Frenchmen. Then they saw the plucky old fellow hold the enemy back while the last of his crew regained the *Tiger's* deck, and then, for an instant, the bulwarks of the lugger were covered by a wild crowd of leaping men, and then nothing more, except the frantic cries of fighting men as they struggled for mastery on the deck of the English ship.

Jack Hammer felt that his last fight was come. Give up his ship he would not; there only remained to die as best as he might. Back to the mast he stood, with a ring of stalwart Britons to support him, while the French, with a bravery equal to their own, hurled themselves upon them. The deck grew slippery with blood, men rolled, fighting in the very scuppers, where some, alas! lay still for ever. Yells of triumph or defiance rent the air, but ever old Jack Hammer faced his foes, a glitter in his eyes, and his sword red to the hilt.

"You stay in the *Nancy*," said Old Bill to his son, as the ship ran alongside the lugger. The next moment Swingle, at the head of his crew, was leaping from the deck of *Le Coq Rouge* into the struggling crowd on board the *Tiger*.

Taken in the rear the French turned to fight for their lives. No need to ask who these new-comers might be, their deep-throated "Hurrah!" proclaimed their nationality, as much as the jovial, reckless delight with which they hurled themselves into the fray.

Bill sought his old friend, saw him fighting two Frenchmen, and sprang forward just in time to break the fall of a cutlass that would have ended Jack Hammer's fights for ever, while with his left fist, straight from the shoulder, he dropped the striker to the deck. As he struck, Old Bill's foot slipped on the wet deck, and he went down. He saw a face with a wicked grin on it above him, and the gleam of a sword raised to strike, when there was a pistol shot and the striker fell, while the face of Young Bill appeared in its place.

"Get back, youngster," he shouted, scrambling to his feet and dashing anew into the fray, adding, "I'll leather ye for disobeying orders. I'll leather ye!"

Taken fore and aft the French could not stand against the reinforcements brought by the *Nancy*, and, though still the larger number, signs of defeat began to manifest themselves. One by one they threw down their weapons, and before many minutes the fight was over.

"Why, Bill, old boy," said Hammer, as he tied up his wounded arm, "I came out to take you, but it seems as you've taken me."

"It was you or the Frenchman, old cock," said Bill, with a grin. "But what's this talk of taking us?"

"Orders, Bill, orders. And they are waiting for you at Dimity Cove too, so you'd ha' had no chance anyhow. Sorry I am to tell 'ee."

"Pretty mess the *Tiger* is in," said Swingle, looking along the deck. "Have ye put any men into the Frenchman yet?"

"I'll see about it, Bill. I may be a little time securing the pris'ners, old man. Arter I've finished with them I'll take your little lot too. Supposing as you have anything contraband aboard." So saying, and with no expression of any sort visible on his face, Jack Hammer stolidly turned his back on his astonished quarry.

"Whew!" whistled Bill Swingle. "He's a good chap, is Jack;

won't be sorry to see the last of us, I dare say. Here, Tom, get our chaps aboard the *Nancy*. We'll just slip away quiet like, 'taint over healthy for us here."

So the smugglers crossed the lugger's deck again, and though none were dangerously wounded, few but had a scratch to show, and Young Bill gloried in a slight flesh wound across his cheek. Again under weigh, the *Nancy* headed once more for England, leaving the two ships still locked together, while Hammer and his men secured their prisoners and made damages good; a leisurely process, for apparently never a man of the *Tiger's* crew saw the smugglers sail away.

" Where shall we land the stuff, skipper ? " said Thomas, who was steering. " Dimity Cove is pretty handy."

" I fancy the beach under Simon Nixon's house would be safer," said Old Bill; " somehow I don't think Dimity Cove is a very wholesome place for us just now. What are you grinning at, youngster ? I shall have to leather ye yet."

A MODERN ODYSSEUS

By LILIAN QUILLER-COUCH

An ordinary boy in an ordinary village does not expect his life to be very full of wild adventure. He may hope for it perhaps, but as a rule school, play and work, with a few extra pranks at birds-nesting or some such time, make up the sum of his every-day experiences, and he gradually settles down to a life of safety and uniformity.

But in the early part of the nineteenth century, the villagers at Kirby-le-Stoke, in Essex, were shaking their heads over the pranks of young William Mann. They declared that he was the most restless, mischievous boy that ever disturbed a peaceful countryside, that he would certainly come to a bad end, and that if he did not it would be because his luck was better than he deserved. Always tumbling into trouble of one sort or another, inciting the other little villagers to mischief, and driving even the squire to his wits' end, that good man at last took the matter into his own hands, and seeing that the boy had courage and daring as well as mischief in him, he said to himself: "The young scamp needs a bigger platform than Kirby to perform his tricks on, he'd better go out into the world."

So when young William was just fourteen years old, and the village was wailing over some unusually exasperating bit of lawlessness which he had committed, Squire Blanshard sent for him.

"This village isn't the place for you, William," he said sternly, when he had given him a short, sharp lecture on his evil ways. "You need a fuller life where you won't have so much time to be a ruffian, and where people will knock it out of you if you try on your bad ways with them. You are fourteen years old, you tell me; and other people tell me that you grow worse every day. Now what do you say to the sea?"

William had not thought much about the sea; he had always considered that, like his ten brothers and sisters, he should grow up and live the usual every-day life that he saw around him. Still, the sea-life looked rather attractive when he came to think of it, and things at Kirby were not particularly pleasant just then, so he gave the squire to understand that if Kirby folk were afraid to have him any longer, he was not afraid to try another kind of experience.

Squire Blanshard lost no time then in taking steps to rid the peaceful village of the turbulent spirit of William Mann, and, using his influence, he soon induced Captain Hingston of the *Falcon* to take the youth on board and try to turn his daring nature to some good use. The *Falcon* was a vessel carrying thirty-two hands all told; it was engaged in sperm-whale fishery in the Pacific, where fine catches of whales were made and a rich trade was done in the oil.

For William the life was a wonderful one; he had hard work and not particularly gentle treatment. But he found that there was so much excitement in the ordinary day's work that he did not find time to plan any extra mischief very often. And he also found that if he did his share and kept a civil tongue in his head every one was ready to be friendly.

For several years William Mann saw much more of the sea than he did of the land, and never once did he turn his face towards Kirby to see how his parents and friends were getting on, and to learn if the neighbours had forgiven him for all the trouble he gave them when he was a child. He stuck to the *Falcon* and he stuck to his work, and he grew to be a fine strong youth by the time he was twenty.

Then one April day in 1836, as the *Falcon* was getting short of wood and water, she made for the Island of Ascension, which is one of the Caroline Islands, long. 145° E. and lat. 10° N. As she drew into shore the crew were in the best of health and spirits, and the vessel, laden with some six hundred barrels of oil, was in capital condition. But, little as they guessed it, the ill-fated *Falcon* was never to gain the open sea again.

The king of the island and all the natives seemed to be very friendly; the vessel took on board all the necessaries for which she had come, and all went well till she was passing out through the reefs to the open sea again. Then came a sudden veering of the wind, which was very strong that day, and in an incredibly short time the *Falcon* was driven broadside on upon a coral reef. Nothing that the crew could do could save her; she became an utter wreck, and captain and men were hard put to it to save themselves and get ashore again. They were able later on, however, to save most of the stores and cargo, and the natives were very useful in helping to break up the remains of the unfortunate ship.

The only thing now to be done was to wait till some passing vessel could give them help. The king was quite ready to help the strangers, and the captain promised to pay him well for all that he did. So all went well for a time and might have gone on well to the end if the cargo had been different. But the natives were in reality rather a warlike people at heart, and the only weapons they possessed were clubs and spears. They wanted something better than these, and they cast their eyes with envy and longing upon the iron hooping of the *Falcon's* oil barrels, feeling sure that if only they could possess that material they could manufacture such swords and sabres as would make them a power and a terror to all the country round.

When once the natives had begun to covet these iron hoops the captain found that constant depredations took place. Do what he would he could not protect the entire cargo. Even dividing the crew into three watches, that the stores might never be without a guard, failed to keep the natives from the hoops; and he feared to use force, realizing that he and his men were but a handful in the midst of the teeming islanders.

At last, however, the determined thieves went so recklessly to work in their desire to get the iron that they ruined some of the barrels and a large quantity of the oil was lost. And when, added to this attack, one of the chiefs stole a bolt of canvas, the captain, infuriated by the dishonesty, and having the man in his grasp, struck him, and so sealed his own doom.

It did not take long for the islanders to plan a general rising. While the captain was arranging a fresh watch and warning his men to keep a very sharp look-out, they were all suddenly amazed to find a regular horde of natives swooping upon them, while others in great numbers lay concealed among the surrounding cocoa-nut trees.

There was no doubt that they had come to wreak vengeance, and the first blow was struck at the captain—a blow on the head with a club which stretched him lifeless. They next attacked the mate, who was quickly overpowered by numbers; and some sailors hurrying to help him were instantly laid low. It was a desperate struggle. The crew in a flash realized the seriousness and apparent hopelessness of the fight, but they intended to die game if they had to die. The little cabin-boy, strange to say, was saved by a native girl, whose heart was tender towards him. She flung her arms round about him, and forced him down, down towards the water's edge; and keeping herself always between him and the attackers, she sheltered him till they both reached one of the boats lying there, when they paddled for their lives away from the massacre and escaped to another island.

The cooper, a brawny fellow, determined to sell his life dearly; with his musket he first fired and killed several before they could touch him; then with the butt end he laid about him right and left. But it was impossible to withstand the numbers, and before long he, too, fell, speared through and through. Even the lifeless bodies were not left unmolested; the enemy savagely tore out the captain's eyes and hoisted the head, bleeding and with gaping sockets, upon a spear.

The lust for blood had seized the revengeful savages; they thirsted for slaughter, and no mercy was shown to a single member of the crew of the *Falcon* who came within their reach. Fortunately most of them escaped to the water, William Mann among them, and there, seizing on the boats, they pulled furiously away from the ghastly scene.

The next shelter which they found was on a neighbouring island; but it was a life of terrible uncertainty which they lived, and the only food which they could get was the fish they managed to catch, and the bread-fruit and cocoa-nuts which they could gather.

After a while William Mann and three comrades tried exploring a little farther, and reaching another island they decided to try it for a time, and they set about building a hut to shelter in. It was an unfortunate decision as it happened, for a short while after they had left their companions on the other island, a man-of-war was sighted, and the remaining members of the crew, waving frantic signals of distress, were seen, and the welcome ship came quickly in to their assistance.

Twenty sailors in all were taken on board, and as no more came forward it was supposed that all who were alive were in that little company. Then going to the other island on which the massacre had taken place, the man-of-war demanded the surrender of the king and three of the chiefs, giving them as an alternative the bombardment of their island and the destruction of every canoe belonging to it. The natives on hearing this shook with terror, and turning on the king and the chiefs they beheaded them, and sent the four severed heads and bodies on board, whereupon the mutilated corpses were at once hung to the yardarm.

Poor William Mann and his three companions knew nothing of this until it was too late and the ship was far beyond reach of their signals.

"A ship!" they gasped, staring in amazement at the ever-diminishing speck upon the water. It had been their chance—and they had missed it.

Despair would have fallen upon them now if they had not determined to keep brave hearts whatever happened.

"If one ship has come another may come," said William Mann, striving to be cheerful. And they watched the last speck disappear, hoping that the same line of sea against the sky might show them another sail approaching.

Day after day passed away, and the four men lived with their lives in their hands, with no clothing but cocoa-nut leaves strung round them, no home but their little hut, no food but what they could catch or pick, and with the natives as a daily menace round about them.

It was difficult to keep cheerful and maintain courage, but they did their best, though after a time it began to seem as if their lives would go on to the end in this monotonous though dangerous manner, without ever another taste of the old, more civilized life. Often and often Mann's thoughts would fly back to the quiet life at Kirby, and it was hard to realize that he, sitting in his hut with a lot of murderous natives within a gun-shot, could ever have been the light-hearted village boy living in the little cottage with his ten brothers and sisters.

Then one day Mann and one of the others, named Rodney, happened to be walking at some distance from the hut, when Rodney, who was a short way behind, shouted suddenly : " Look out, Mann ! "

Mann, turning quickly, saw in a flash that a native he had just passed was upon him knife in hand, and the cut which had undoubtedly been intended to sever the white man's head from his body, gashed across his cheek, jaw and throat.

Staggering forward under the blow he saw a second savage raising a knife, and Mann, throwing up his arm to ward off the blow, felt it descend upon his fingers, completely slashing off two and leaving the others hanging by a shred of flesh. Weaponless, and nearly blinded with blood from the cut across his face, he was at a terrible disadvantage, and as a third man rushed at him with uplifted club to give him his death-blow, he cried out once or twice in his agony and fell senseless to the ground, just conscious of hearing poor Rodney's death-cry mingling with his own call of despair.

It was some hours later that poor Mann struggled back to consciousness, to find himself alone, except for Rodney's body lying near with its head cleft through to the neck. In an agony of pain and of anxiety lest his other companions should have been found in their hut and slaughtered also, Mann managed to crawl slowly and painfully back.

To his intense relief his mates were still unhurt, and helping him into the hut they did their best for him and his wounds, binding up his jaw, and strapping his remaining fingers on to his hand as well as they could. Then taking their muskets they sat and watched and waited.

They were not attacked again, but for a while longer they lived this life of dread and watching, the two sailors nursing Mann and sitting,

"A NATIVE HE HAD JUST PASSED WAS UPON HIM KNIFE IN HAND" musket in hand, alert for every sound, and only turning their eyes from the possible places of ambush to scan the sea for a sail.

At last, " Thank God ! " cried one of the men, starting up one day. " Look ! Look ! "

The other man ran forward. " A ship ! " he cried. " Oh, God be thanked, a ship ! "

Mann raised himself on his elbow in his excitement, then crawling to the door he, with his comrades, watched the seeming miracle—a vessel, at last, a vessel standing for the bay.

She was an American whaler, and her captain, on seeing the extraordinary looking figures which hurried towards him, took them all on board and listened to their story. With good-natured care they did their best for Mann, and he in the height of his joy at the thought of rescue forgot his pain for a time.

But Mann had need now of a different sort of courage from that which he had exercised so long; for although the gash across his face had partly healed, the rough surgery of his well-meaning friends had not been quite successful, and although they had placed a piece of wood between his teeth before they had bound up his jaw, to allow sufficient opening for him to take in nourishment, one tooth had protruded awkwardly at the side, and by constant chafing kept a hole open in the cheek. The pain of this was very bad to bear, and the captain determined to convey the poor fellow to Guam, one of the Marianas, a Spanish settlement, where he knew there was an English doctor.

The doctor was a skilful man, and he relieved Mann very much; but when he glanced at the cheek he looked serious.

" The tooth," he said at last, " must be taken out."

" Yes, sir," agreed Mann.

But still the doctor looked grave, and after examining the jaw thoroughly again he said—

" It's no good, my poor fellow. It's impossible for me to take out the tooth with the jaw so firmly set as yours has become. I'm sorry to say there is nothing for it but a re-cutting open of the cheek, for I must draw the tooth from the outside."

To contemplate in cold blood a gashing open of the face is a very different matter from a sudden and unexpected slash of the knife; but Mann was not the person to shirk pain when pain was necessary, so with only a gulp and a twist of his lips, he gave his consent.

Everything went well after this, and the wound healed up cleanly; but the scars about his head and the uselessness of his hand were continual reminders of the closeness at which he had stood to death.

Finally Mann and one of his mates found their way to the Island of Pagon, where, they heard, there was buried treasure to be found. Many years before, a Spanish pirate-ship had looted from the Roman Catholic churches along the coasts of Chili and Brazil, and had robbed them of a wealth of rich jewels and treasures. Then flying before the breeze the crew escaped from the resentful people whom they had wronged, and hid their wealth on this desolate, uninhabited Island of Pagon.

The adventurous spirit was still strong in Mann, and such a story as this was enough to set him on the way to Pagon Island. But although he and his mate spent a couple of years there, they met with no success in the matter of treasure-finding.

For many years after this Mann was engaged in trading in pearl shells and tortoise shells among the South Pacific Islands. His earlier experiences among the natives of the Isle of Ascension had not made him afraid of other natives, and he lived among them in complete friendliness, till his love for travel set him wandering again.

Illness at last tethered him for a while in the Hong-Kong hospital, and the English consul and chaplain, hearing of his case, were very kind to him, and when he was better they collected a sum of money, and presented him with his passage to his native land, and a certain sum to keep him in comfort after his life of risk and danger and cruel suffering.

So after fifty-six years of absence the mischievous boy came home again to the little village of Kirby, to find that every one had long forgiven his boyish escapades. They had indeed long given him up as dead, but were eager now to hear of the wonderful things he had seen and the hairbreadth escapes he had had.

From *The Romance of Every Day.*

FOREST ADVENTURES

By HERBERT STRANG

I. Samba meets the Little Men

In the forest near the ruined Congo village of Banonga, Mr. Martindale, who was "prospecting" for gold, found a young boy, Samba, wounded and half-starved. His village had been raided by the soldiers of the Free State; many of the people had been killed; others, Samba's parents among them, had fled into the recesses of the forest. Mr. Martindale spoke kindly to the boy through Nando, his native interpreter, and decided to take him in his canoe up the river.

Samba had cheerfully accompanied Mr. Martindale's expedition, in the confidence that one of its principal objects, if not indeed its main one, was the discovery of his parents. Nando had told him, on the ruins of Banonga, that the white man would help him in his search, and the white man had treated him so kindly that he believed what Nando said. But as the days passed and the canoes went farther and farther up stream, miles away from Banonga, the boy began to be uneasy. More than once he reminded Nando of his promise, only to be put off with excuses: the white man was a very big chief, and such a trifling matter as the whereabouts of a black boy's father and mother could not be expected to engage him until his own business was completed.

Samba became more and more restless. He wished he could open the matter himself to the white men; but the few words of English he had picked up were as useless to him as any schoolboy's French. Samba began to distrust Nando. What if the man's assurances were false, and there had never been any intention of seeking his father? The white men had been kind to him; they gave him good food; he was pleased with the knife presented to him as a reward for his watchfulness; but all these were small things beside the fact that his parents were lost to him. Had the white men no fathers ? he wondered.

At length he came to a great resolution. If they would not help him, he must help himself. He would slip away one night and set off in search. He well knew that in cutting himself adrift from the expedition many days' journey from his old home he was exchanging ease and plenty for certain hardship and many dangers known and unknown. The forest in the neighbourhood of Banonga was as a playground to him ; but he could not know what awaited him in a country so remote as this. He had never been more than half-a-day's journey from home, but he had heard of unfriendly tribes who might kill him, or at best keep him enslaved. And the white men of Bula Matadi—the Congo State—did not they sometimes seize black boys, and make them soldiers or serfs ? Yet all these perils must be faced ; Samba loved his parents, and in his case love cast out fear.

One morning, very early, when every one in the camp was occupied with the first duties of the day, Samba stole away. His own treasured knife was slung by a cord about his neck ; he carried on his hip, negro-fashion, a discarded biscuit tin which he had filled with food saved from his meals of the previous day ; and Mr. Martindale's knife dangled from his waist cord. It was easy to slip away unseen ; the camp was surrounded by trees, and within a minute he was out of sight. He guessed that an hour or two would pass before his absence was discovered, and then pursuit would be vain.

But he had not gone far when he heard a joyous bark behind him, and Pat, the Irish terrier, came bounding along, leaping up at him, looking up in his face, as if to say : " You are going a-hunting : I will come too, and we will enjoy ourselves." Samba stopped, and knelt down and put his arms about the dog's neck. Should he take him ? The temptation was great : Pat and he were staunch friends ; they understood each other, and the dog would be excellent company in the forest. But Samba reflected. Pat did not belong to him, and he had never stolen anything in his life. The dog's master, Barney, the Irish servant of Mr. Martindale, had been good to him : it would be unkind to rob him. And Pat was a fighter : he was as brave as Samba himself, but a great deal more noisy and much less discreet. Samba knew the ways of the forest; it was wise to avoid the dangerous beasts, to match their stealth with stealth; Pat would attack them, and certainly come off worst. No, Pat must go back. So Samba patted him, rubbed his head on the dog's rough coat, let Pat lick his face, and talked to him seriously. Then he got up and pointed towards the camp and clapped his hands, and when Pat showed a disposition still to follow him, he waved his arms and spoke to him again. Pat understood; he halted and watched the boy till he disappeared among the trees; then, giving one low whine, he trotted back with his tail sorrowfully lowered.

Samba went on. He had come to the river, but he meant to avoid it now. The river wound this way and that: the journey overland would be shorter. He might be sought for along the bank; but in the forest wilds he would at least be safe from pursuit, whatever other dangers he might encounter. At intervals along the bank, too, lay many villages: and Samba was less afraid of beasts than of men. So, choosing by the instinct which every forest man seems to possess a direction that would lead towards his distant village, he went on with lithe and springy gait, humming an old song his grandfather Mirambo had taught him.

His path at first led through a grassy country, with trees and bush in plenty, yet not so thick but that the sunlight came freely through the foliage, making many shining circles on the ground. But after about two hours the forest thickened; the sunlit spaces became fewer, the undergrowth more and more tangled. At midday he sat down by the edge of a trickling stream to eat his dinner of manioc, then set off again. The forest was now denser than anything to which he had been accustomed near Banonga, and he went more warily, his eyes keen to mark the tracks of animals, his ears alive to catch every sound. He noticed here the scratches of a leopard on a tree trunk, there the trampled undergrowth where an elephant had passed; but he saw no living creature save a few snakes and lizards, and once a hare that scurried across his path as he approached. He knew that in the forest it is night that brings danger.

The forest became ever thicker, and as evening drew on it grew dark and chill. The ground was soft with layers of rotted foliage, the air heavy with the musty smell of vegetation in decay. Samba's teeth chattered with the cold, and he could not help longing for Barney's cosy hut and the warm companionship of the dog. It was time to sleep. Could he venture to build a fire? The smoke might attract men, but he had seen no signs of human habitation. It would at any rate repel insects and beasts. Yes—he would build a fire.

First he sought for a tree with a broad overhanging branch on which he could perch himself for the night. Then he made a wide circuit to assure himself that there were no enemies near at hand. In the course of his round he came to a narrow clearing where an outcrop of rock had prevented vegetation, and on the edges of this he found sufficient dry brushwood to make his fire. Collecting an armful, he carried it unerringly to his chosen tree, heaped it below the hospitable branch, and with his knife whittled a hard dry stick to a sharp point.

He selected then a square lump of wood, cut a little hollow in it, and, holding his pointed stick upright in the hollow, whirled it about rapidly between his hands until first smoke and then a spark appeared. Having kindled his fire he banked it down with damp moss he found hard by, so as to prevent it from blazing too high and endangering his tree or attracting attention. Then he climbed up into the branch; there he would be safest from prowling beasts. The acrid smoke rose from the fire beneath and enveloped him, but it gave him no discomfort, rather a feeling of "homeness" and well-being; such had been the accompaniment of sleep all his life long in his father's hut at Banonga. Curled up on that low bough he slept through the long hours—a dreamless sleep, undisturbed by the bark of hyenas, the squeal of monkeys, or the wail of tiger-cats.

When he awoke he was stiff and cold. It was still dark, but even at midday the sun can but feebly light the thickest parts of the Congo Forest. The fire had gone out; but Samba did not venture to leave his perch until the glimmer of dawn, pale though it was, gave him light enough to see by. He was ravenously hungry, and did not spare the food left in his tin; many a time he had found food in the forest near his home, and now that he felt well and strong, no fear of starvation troubled him. Having finished his simple breakfast, he slung the empty can over his hip and set off on his journey.

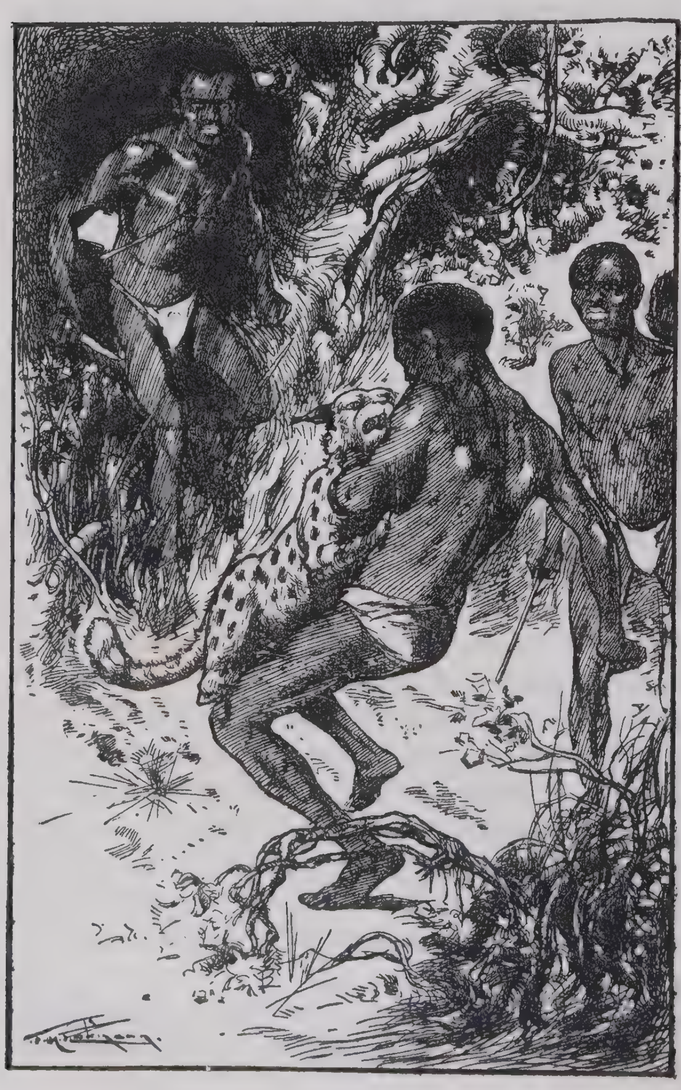
For two days he tramped on and on, plucking here the red berries of the phrynia, there the long crimson fruit of the amoma, with mushrooms in plenty. Nothing untoward had happened. In this part of the forest beasts appeared to be few. Now and again he heard the rapping noise made by the soko, the gibber of monkeys, the squawk of parrots; once he stood behind a broad trunk and watched breathlessly as a tiger-cat stalked a heedless rabbit; each night he lighted his fire and found a serviceable branch on which to rest.

But on the third day he was less happy. The farther he walked, the denser became the forest, the more difficult his path. Edible berries were rarer; fewer trees had fungi growing about their roots; he had to content himself with forest beans in their brown tough rind. When the evening was drawing on he could find no dry fuel for a fire, and now, instead of seeking a branch for a sleeping-place, he looked for a hollow tree which would give him some shelter from the cold damp air of night. Having found his tree he gathered a handful of moss, set fire to it from his stick and block, which he had carefully preserved, and threw the smouldering heap into the hollow to smoke out noxious insects, or a snake, if perchance one had made his home there.

The fourth day was a repetition of the third, with more discomforts. Sometimes the tangled vines and creepers were so thick that he had to go round about to find a path. The vegetation provided still less food, only a few jack fruit and the wild fruit of the motanga rewarding his search. He was so hungry at midday that he was reduced to collecting slugs from the trees, a fare he would fain have avoided. Fearless as he was, he was beginning to be anxious; for to make a certain course in this dense forest was well-nigh impossible.

At dusk, when again he sought a hollow tree and dropped a heap of smouldering herbage into the hole, he started back with a low cry, for he heard an ominous hiss in the depths, and was only just in time to avoid a python which had been roused from sleep by the burning mass. In a twinkling the huge coils spread themselves like a released watch-spring beyond the mouth of the hole and along the lowermost branch of the tree. With all his forest lore, Samba was surprised to find that a python could move so quickly. The instant he heard the angry hiss he crouched low against the trunk, thankful that the reptile had chosen a branch on the other side. Armed only with a knife, he knew himself no match for a twenty-foot python; had he not seen a young hippopotamus strangled by a python no larger than this? Like Brer Rabbit, Samba lay low and said nothing: until the python, swinging itself on to the branch of an adjacent tree a few feet away, disappeared in the foliage. Then, allowing time for the reptile to settle elsewhere, Samba sought safer quarters. The python's house was comfortable, even commodious; but Samba would scarcely have slept as soundly as he was wont in uncertainty whether the disturbed owner might not after all return home.

He felt very cramped and miserable when he rose next day to resume his journey. This morning he had to start without breakfast, for neither fruits nor berries were to be had; a search among fallen trees failed even to discover ants of which to make a scanty meal. Constant walking and privation were telling on his frame; his eyes were less bright, his step was less elastic. But there was a great heart within him; he plodded on; he had set out to find his father and mother; he would not turn back. The dangers ahead could be no worse than those he had already met, and no experienced general of an army could have known better than Samba that to retreat is often more perilous than to advance.



In the afternoon, when, having found a few berries, he had eaten the only meal of the day and was about to seek, earlier than usual, his quarters for the night, he heard, from a short distance to the left of his track, a great noise of growling and snarling. The sounds were not like those of any animals he knew. With cautious steps he made his way through the matted undergrowth towards the noise. Almost unawares he came upon an extraordinary sight. In the centre of an open space, scarcely twenty feet across, a small man, lighter in hue than the majority of Congolese natives, was struggling to free himself from the grip of a serval which had buried its claws deep in his body and thigh. Two other small men, less even than Samba in height, were leaping and yelling around their comrade, apparently instructing him how to act, though neither made use of the light spears they carried to attack the furious beast. The serval, its greenish eyes brilliant with rage, was an unusually powerful specimen of its kind, resembling indeed a leopard rather than a tiger-cat. It was bent, as it seemed, upon working its way upward to the man's throat, and its reddish spotted coat was so like his skin in hue that, as they writhed and twisted this way and that, an onlooker might well have hesitated to launch a spear at the beast for fear of hitting the man.

One of the little man's hands had a grip of the serval's throat; but he was not strong enough to strangle it, and the lightning quickness of the animal's movements prevented him from gripping it with the other hand. Even a sturdily-built European might well have failed to gain the mastery in a fight with such a foe, and the little man had neither the strength nor the staying power to hold out much longer. Yet his companions continued to yell and dance round, keeping well out of reach of the terrible claws; while blood was streaming from a dozen deep gashes in the little man's body.

Samba stood but a few moments gazing at the scene. The instinct of the born hunter was awake in him, and that higher instinct which moves a man to help his kind. Clutching his broad knife he bounded into the open, reached the fainting man in two leaps, and plunged the blade deep into the creature's side behind the shoulder. With a convulsive wriggle the serval made a last attempt to bury its fangs in its victim's neck. Then its muscles suddenly relaxed, and it fell dead to the ground.

Samba's intervention had come too late. The man had been so terribly mauled that his life was ebbing fast. His comrades looked at him and began to make strange little moaning cries; then they laid him on a bed of leaves and turned their attention to Samba. He knew that he was in the presence of Bambute, the dreaded pigmies of the forest. Never before had he seen them; but he had heard of them as fearless hunters and daring fighters, who moved about from place to place in the forest, and levied toll upon the plantations of larger men. The two little men came to him and patted his arms and jabbered together; but he understood nothing of what they said. By signs he explained to them that he was hungry. Then, leaving their wounded comrade to his fate, they took Samba by the hands and led him rapidly into the forest, following a path which could scarcely have been detected by any except themselves. In some twenty minutes they arrived at a clearing where stood a group of two score small huts, like beehives, no more than four feet high, with an opening eighteen inches square, just large enough to allow a pigmy to creep through. Pigmies, men and women, were squatting around—ugly little people, but well-made and muscular, with leaves and grass aprons for all clothing, and devoid of such ornaments as an ordinary negro loves.

They sprang up as Samba approached between his guides, and a great babel of question and answer arose, like the chattering of monkeys. The story was told; none showed any concern for the man left to die. A plentiful dinner of antelope flesh and bananas was soon placed before Samba, and it was clear that the pigmies were ready to make much of the stranger who had so boldly attacked the serval.

One of them knew a little of a Congolese dialect, and he succeeded in making Samba understand that the chief was pleased with him, and wished to adopt him as his son. Samba shook his head and smiled; his own parents were alive, he said; he wished for no others. This made the chief angry. The chiefs of some of the big men had often adopted pigmy boys and made slaves of them; it was now his turn. The whole community scowled and snarled so fiercely that Samba thought the safest course was to feign acquiescence for the moment, and seize the first opportunity afterwards of slipping away.

But nearly three weeks passed before a chance presented itself. The pigmies kept him with them, never letting him go out of their sight. They fed him well—almost too well, expecting his powers of consumption to be equal to their own. Never before had he seen such extraordinary eaters. One little man would squat before a stalk bearing fifty or sixty bananas, and eat them all. True, he lay moaning and groaning all night, but next morning would be quite ready to gorge an equal meal. Since they did not cultivate the ground themselves, Samba wondered where they obtained their plentiful supply of bananas and manioc. He learnt by and by that they appropriated what they pleased from the plantations of a neighbouring tribe of big men, who had too great a respect for the pigmies' poisoned arrows and spears to protest. Samba hoped that he might one day escape to this tribe, but a shifting of the village rendered this impossible, though it afforded the boy the opportunity for which he had so long been waiting.

On the night when the pigmy tribe settled down in its new home, four days' journey from the old, Samba took advantage of the fatigue of his captors to steal away. He had chosen the darkest hour before the dawn, and knowing that he would very soon be missed and followed up, he struck off through the forest as rapidly as he could. With plentiful food he had recovered his old strength and vigour, and he strode along fleetly, finding his way chiefly by the nature of the ground beneath his feet; for there was no true path, and the forest was almost completely dark, even when dawn had broken elsewhere. As the morning drew on the leafy arcades became faintly illuminated, and he could then see sufficiently well to choose the easiest way through the obstacles that beset his course.

Despite all his exertions his progress was very slow. Well he knew that, expert though he was in forest travel, he could not move through these tangled mazes with anything like the speed of the active little men who by this time were almost certainly on his track. At the best he could hardly have got more than two miles' start. As he threaded his way through the brushwood, hacking with his knife at obstructive creepers, and receiving many a scratch from briar and thorn, he tried to think of some way of throwing the pursuers off the scent; but every yard of progress demanded so much exertion that he was unequal to the effort of devising any likely ruse.

Suddenly coming upon a shallow stream about two yards wide that ran across his line of march, he saw in a flash a chance of covering his trail. He stepped into the stream, pausing for a moment to drink, then waded a few paces against the current, narrowly scanning the bordering trees. They showed a close network of interlacing branches, one tree encroaching on another. Choosing a bough overhanging the brook, just above his head, Samba drew himself up into the tree, taking care that no spots of water were left on the branch to betray him. Then, clambering nimbly like a monkey from bough to bough, he made a path for himself through the trees at an angle half-way between the direction of the stream and of his march through the forest. He hoped that, losing his track in the stream, the Bambute would jump to the conclusion that he was making his way up or down its bed, and would continue their chase accordingly.

Among the trees his progress was even slower than on the ground. Every now and again he had to return on his tracks, encountering a branch that, serviceable as it might look, proved either too high or too low, or not strong enough to bear his weight. And he was making more noise than he liked. There was not only the rustle and creak of parting leaves and bending twigs, and the crack of small branches that snapped under his hand; but his intrusion scared the natural denizens of the forest, and they clattered away with loud cries of alarm—grey parrots in hundreds, green pigeons, occasionally a hawk or the great blue plantain-eater. The screeches of the birds smothered, indeed, any sound that he himself might make; but such long-continued evidence of disturbance might awaken the suspicion of the little men and guide them to his whereabouts.

By and by he came to a gap in the forest. The clear sunlight was welcome as a guide to his course; but he saw that to follow the direction which he believed would bring him towards Banonga he must now leave the trees. He stopped for a few minutes to recover breath, and to consider what he had best do. As he lay stretched along a bough, his eye travelled back over the path he had come. The vagaries of lightning that had struck down two forest giants in close proximity disclosed to his view a stretch of some twenty yards of the stream which he had just crossed on his primeval suspension bridge. What caused him to start and draw himself together, shrinking behind a leafy screen thick enough to hide him even from the practised eyes of the little forest men? There, in the bed of the stream, glancing this way and that, at the water, the banks, the trees on every side, were a file of Bambute, carrying their little bows and arrows and their short light spears. They moved swiftly, silently, some bending towards the ground, others peering to right and left with a keenness that nothing could escape. Samba's heart thumped against his ribs as he watched them. He counted them as they passed one after another across the gap; they numbered twenty, and he was not sure that he had seen the first.

The last disappeared. Samba waited. Had his ruse succeeded? There was absolute silence; he heard neither footstep nor voice. But the little men must soon find out their mistake. They would then cast back to the point where they had lost the scent. Could they pick it up again—trace him to the tree and follow him up? He could not tell. They must have been close upon him when he climbed into the tree; evidently he had left the path only in the nick of time. This much he had gained. But he dared not wait longer; there was no safety for him while they were so near; he must on.

II. A Trip with a Crocodile

Samba looked warily round, then began to descend from his perch in the tree, moving as slowly and with as many pauses as a timid bather stepping into the water. Once more he was on the ground. Pausing only to throw a rapid glance on all sides, he struck off in a direction at right angles to the course of the stream, and resumed his laborious march through the forest maze.

Hour after hour he pushed on without meeting a living creature. But he had heard too much of the cunning and determination of the Congo dwarfs to delude himself with the idea that he had finally shaken them off. Tired as he was, sweating in the moist oppressive heat, he dared not rest, even to eat in comfort the food he had brought in his tin. He nibbled morsels as he went, hoping that by good speed during the whole day he might get far enough from the pigmies to make his ultimate escape secure.

Towards evening he heard in front of him the long monotonous rustle of a stream foaming over a rocky bed. He was careful in approaching it: to meet a crocodile ambushed near the bank would be as dangerous as to meet a man. Pushing his way cautiously through the shrubs, he came to the edge of a broad river, flowing in swift eddies from white rapids above. It seemed to Samba that this must be a tributary of the Lemba, the river on whose bank he had left the white men, and to which, lower down, he must ultimately make his way. Pursuit by the white men might now be safely disregarded; Samba thought he could hardly do better than keep to the stream, taking his chance of meeting negroes at isolated villages on the banks. These, if he met them, would at any rate be easier to elude than the Bambute.

But the sun was going down, the air becoming chill. He must find a shelter for the night and pursue his riverside journey next day. A little search revealed, on a bluff above the river, a boulder having a deep cavity on one side. Here Samba sat down to eat the little food left in his tin; then he curled himself up for the night. Nothing disturbed his sleep.

In the morning he felt more than usually hungry. His tin was empty; he did not care to leave the river and go hunting in the forest, perhaps vainly, for berries or roots. A little way down stream he noticed a spot where the dark surface of the water was scarcely disturbed by a ripple; was that a deep pool, he wondered, where fish might be? He went down to the edge and, leaning flat upon a rock, peeped over. Yes; in the depths he caught the scaly gleam of darting fish.

Springing up, he went to a swampy patch hard by and cut a long, straight, stiff reed. Then he took the hard stick with which he made fire, and sharpening the point until it pricked like a needle, he fitted the wood to the reed so as to make a spear. With this in his hand he once more leant over the pool. He lay still for a few moments, intently watching; then, with a movement of extraordinary swiftness, he plunged his spear into the depths, and brought it out with a silvery trout impaled. The fish had stopped to nibble at a root in the bank. When Samba had thus caught three he was satisfied. He did not pause to cook the fish. He split them open, dexterously boned and cleaned them, and ate them raw.

He had scarcely finished his breakfast when he saw, hurtling down the rapids above him, a huge forest tree—a mass of green, for most of its branches in full leaf were still upon it. Clearly it had not long lost its grip of earth. It came swirling towards Samba, every now and then stopping as its submerged part was caught by some rock, only to be whirled round and driven past the obstacle by the weight of water behind. It made a zigzag course through the rapids, and then floated peacefully down the still reach of water beneath.

As he watched the tree sailing gently towards him, Samba had an idea. Why not use it as a raft to carry him on his way? It was strong enough to bear his weight; he could hide in the foliage with at least as good a chance of escaping observation as if he were moving along the banks.

By the time he had grasped the notion the tree was past him. He sprang up, raced along until he was level with it, then took a neat header into the water. A minute's rapid swimming brought him to the end of the trunk, which, he saw, had been snapped clean off and was not encumbered by the roots. He clambered up, and the trunk was so long that his trifling weight scarcely depressed its end. Smiling with pleasure, he crawled along it until he was in the centre of the leafy screen.

This, however, now that he was there, did not seem so dense as when he had viewed it from the bank ; he was not concealed so well as he had hoped. Every now and again, too, his novel raft gave an ominous lurch and roll, suggesting that the portion above water might at any moment change places with that below. If that happened, Samba wondered, would he be able to disengage himself from the tangle of branches and swim clear ? But these momentary fears were banished by the novelty and excitement of his position. How delightful it was, after his toilsome and fatiguing journey through the forest, to float down the river without effort of his own in a leafy arbour that defended him from the fierce rays of the sun ! And his voyage had the pleasures of variety. Sometimes the foliaged top went first ; then, when the branches swept the bottom of the stream in shallow reaches, the trunk swung round and went broadside to the current. Sometimes the branches stuck fast, the current carried the trunk round in a circle, and when an eddy set it again in motion, the trunk end became the bow of this uneasy ship. Bump ! That was some rock or sandbank ; the tree shook, and Samba was nearly toppled from his perch. It was all right ; the friendly water had washed the tree clear, and Samba was off again, his bright eyes gleaming with fun as he peered between the branches.

It was early in the afternoon, and very hot even for those latitudes. Everything seemed asleep. No breeze ruffled the leaves in the trees along the banks. The air quivered. Samba was dozing, lulled by the gentle motion of the tree, whose progress had not for some time been checked.

All at once there was a shock. Samba instinctively clutched a branch as he felt himself jerked from his seat. His lumbering vessel was twirling round; and looking through the leaves, he saw that it was caught by the head on a sandbank in midstream.

But next moment he felt a shiver run down his spine, and an eery creeping about the roots of his hair. Below him, not four feet away, a gigantic crocodile was staring at him with his cunning baleful eyes. The swish of the projecting branches upon the sandbank had aroused the reptile from his siesta on this vantage ground, whence, at the lazy opening of an eye, he could survey a long stretch of the river. And he had awoke to see a plump and tempting black boy at the inconsiderable altitude of four feet above his snout.

Those who have seen the crocodile only in his hours of ease, lazily sunning himself on a river bank, or floating with scarcely more than his eyes and forehead visible on the surface of the stream, may have come to the comfortable conclusion that he is a slow-moving and lethargic beast. But see him rushing at the bank to seize in his terrible jaws the unwary antelope or zebra that has come to drink, or to sweep it into the river with a single blow of his mighty tail. Watch him when, roused from his doze on a sandbank, by the sting of a rifle bullet on his armour, he vanishes with lightning rapidity beneath the water. At one moment to all seeming as lifeless as a log, the next he is a raging monster, ready to tear and rend any hapless creature which his inertness has beguiled.

Of the two, Samba and the crocodile, it was the saurian that first recovered his wits. His instinct when disturbed at close quarters is to rush forthwith upon his enemy or victim. Thus did the crocodile now. Considering that he is a beast not built for jumping, the leap he attempted, with a spasmodic wriggle of his formidable tail, was quite a creditable feat. With his teeth he grazed the lower part of the branch on which Samba sat; and the boy, gazing down into the beast's eyes, shuddered and shrank away. Fortunate it was for him that his legs had not been dangling. Nothing could then have saved him.

The reptile, slipping back after its failure, maintained its hold on the lower branches with its forefeet. Before it could make a second attempt, Samba had swung himself into the branch above. The tree toppled slightly, and for one moment of terror Samba feared he would be thrown into the very jaws of the monster. But the sandbank held the tree firmly, and that peril was past.

With thick foliage between it and the boy, the crocodile saw no chance of securing its victim from its present position. But it was determined not to be balked, and, cunning beast ! could afford to wait. It seemed to know that the boy was only safe so long as he clung to his perch. On the sandbank, or in the water, his end would alike be speedy. So the reptile slid off the bank into the water, and swam to the trunk end of the tree, which had been swung round by the current and was now pointing down stream. If it could not leap, it could crawl, and up the trunk the approach to its prey was easy.

Samba's eyes were now wide with fright, as he saw the beast's intention. Up a tree on the river bank he could have laughed any crocodile to scorn ; but this sandbank in midstream was ground peculiarly the creature's own, even though the prey was on a branch ten feet above it. With its experience of sandbanks the crocodile knew there was no permanency in this arrangement.

The attempts of the huge reptile to gain a footing on the trunk had a result which caused Samba mingled hope and fear. The tree floated clear of the bank, and the voyage began again. But how different were the circumstances ! In the stern, no longer a cheerful, smiling boy, carelessly watching the slow banks glide by, but a boy whose hands and feet gripped his perch with anxious tenacity, and whose scared eyes were quick to mark every movement of the unwelcome, the abhorred, passenger amidships. With many a splash of its tail, and many a grunt of impatient fury, the monster at last made good its footing on the broad trunk, which under its weight was for more than a quarter of its length invisible beneath the surface of the water. For some minutes it lay still, staring at Samba with unwinking eyes, displaying all its teeth as if to grin sardonically at its victim. Samba regretted for the moment that he had not swarmed down from his perch and attacked the crocodile with his knife while he was still struggling to mount the trunk. But then he reflected that he had after all done wisely, for the reptile would have slid back into the water, and before Samba could gain his retreat, he might have been swept off by one swish of the terrible tail.

Samba, as he had shown more than once, and notably in the recent incident of the serval, had no lack of courage; but he had never before been at such close quarters with a crocodile, the most terrible of all the natural enemies of man in the regions of the Congo. And as he sat and watched the glassy stare of the hideous reptile now wriggling inch by inch towards him, he felt a strange helplessness, a kind of fascination that seemed to chill and paralyze his power of movement as of thought. He had retreated as far as he dared. His weight had caused some of the slenderer and more elastic branches to bend towards the water; he had even imagined that, as he tested them, the pressure threatened to make the tree revolve. What his fate would be if the whirling of the trunk on its axis brought him into the river he well knew. The crocodile would slip as nimbly as an eel after him; and, entangled in the foliage, which to his armoured enemy would offer no obstacle, he would fall an easy prey.

The crocodile wriggled on, till it came to the place where the first branch forked from the trunk. Scarcely more than its own length now separated it from Samba. Apparently it had come as near as it cared to venture; not being a climber, the feat of crawling up the tapering branch on which Samba was perched was not one to its taste. It lay still, with jaws agape, its eyes half-closed in a kind of wicked leer.

Samba tried to look away from the hideous beast, but in vain; he found his gaze drawn back uncontrollably. He felt even more subject to the fascination now that the crocodile's movements had ceased. The conviction was growing upon him that sooner or later he would slide down the branch and fall dreamily into the open jaws. He was fast becoming hypnotized.

But he was roused from this dangerous trancelike state by a sudden roll of the tree. Perched high as he was, the motion caused him to swing through an arc of several yards, and brought him perilously near the water. The danger quickened his faculties: he clung on with a tighter grip, bethinking himself to look whether his fishing spear, which he had stuck into the bark, was still safe. He was relieved to find that it was undisturbed. The tree righted itself, and a gleam of hope lightened Samba's mind when he saw that the crocodile was in the water. Though, stretched on the trunk, the beast had felt the roll less than Samba above, it had a less tenacious grip and less ability to adapt itself; and first the tail, then the rest of its body had slid off. It was violently struggling to regain its position, its jaw resting on the trunk, its forepaws furiously beating the water.

The memory of the reptile's former difficulties in mounting inspired Samba with an idea, which, impelled equally by terror and hate, he was prompt to act upon. The tree was still rocking slightly before regaining its steadiness, and the crocodile, despite its efforts, was unable to gain a firm grip on the moving trunk. All its attention was engaged upon the accomplishment of its immediate purpose: it would lose the dainty morsel if it did not once more mount the tree. Samba was quick to seize the critical moment. Spear in hand he crept downwards along the branch on which he had been perched, careful that his movements should not divert the crocodile's attention. Reaching the junction of the branch with the parent stem, only five or six feet from the reptile, he let himself down noiselessly into the river on the far side of the tree, and swam for a second or two until he came opposite the crocodile. During these few seconds he had been hidden from the creature's view by the mass of the trunk, which rose out of the water to some height above his head.

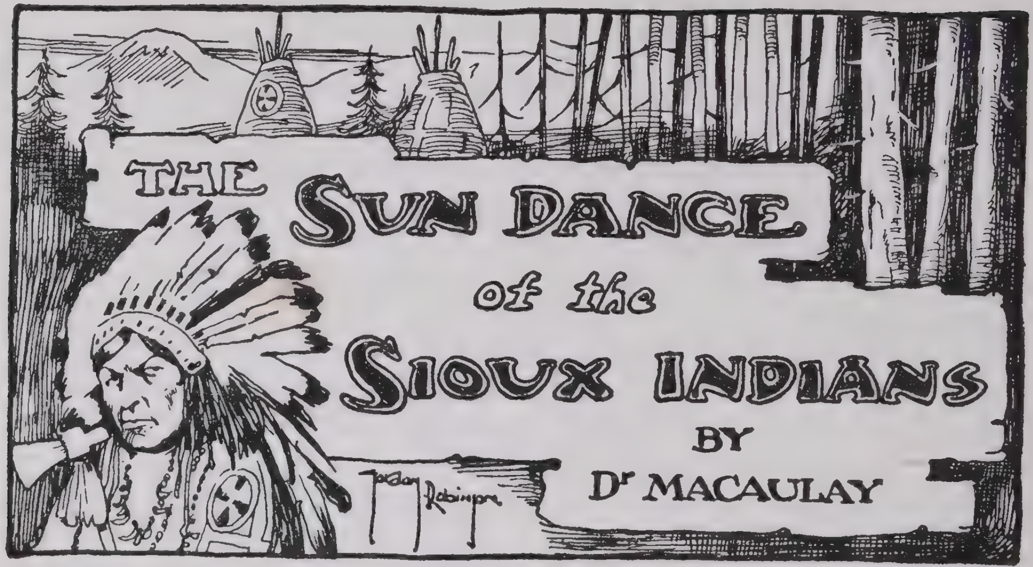
The crocodile had now managed to get its forepaws on the tree, and in struggling to hoist itself its snout was raised almost upright, exposing the soft underside, the sole part in which it is vulnerable to anything except a very heavy bullet. Samba caught sight of the tip of the snout above the tree; here was the opportunity he had hoped for in making this hazardous experiment. Taking with his left hand a firm grip of a wart on the trunk, he raised himself in the water, and with the right hand drove his spear twice into the monster's throat. The crocodile made no sound; a lash of the powerful tail drove up a wave that caused the tree to rock violently; then the huge body slipped backwards into the water.

The moment he had driven his spear home Samba let go his hold on the tree, and trod water until the current brought the foliage to him. Then he drew himself nimbly up into the branch he had formerly occupied. He was breathless, and scarcely yet recovered from his scare; but there was no sign of the crocodile, and knowing that the reptile when mortally wounded sinks into deep water, he felt that his enemy had gone for ever. He heaved a deep sigh of relief, but chancing to look back, he noticed with a start of renewed dread that the water in the wake of the tree was faintly tinged with red. Was it possible that the crocodile, though wounded, was still following? He felt a shiver thrill through him, and bending down from his perch, kept his eyes fixed in a stare on that ominous sanguine thread.

The minutes passed. Still the water showed that faint persistent tinge. Samba was becoming more and more nervous. Like the reptile's eyes but a little while ago, that line of red held his gaze in a strange fascination. He was still watching it when the tree suddenly gave a violent lurch, and turned half over. Samba, whose hold had relaxed in his nervousness, was flung off the branch into a clump of bushes at the side of the river, which here began to race rapidly through a deep gorge. Scratched and dazed by the fall, he picked himself up slowly. He rubbed his eyes. What was this? He was in the midst of a group of pigmies, who were pointing excitedly, uttering their strange coughing cry, to the branches of the tree. In its lurch it had been turned almost completely round, so that the foliage formerly beneath the water was now uppermost. And there, firmly wedged in a fork of two boughs, lay the lifeless body of the crocodile.

The Bambute jabbered to Samba, stroked his arms, patted his back, examined the spear which, though it was broken in his fall, he had not let go. From the bank they had witnessed the boy's bold fight, and they had followed the course of the floating tree until it ran ashore on a jutting bed of rock. Samba made signs that he wished to pursue his journey on foot; but the Bambute shook their heads and grunted and carried him away with them. Once more he was a prisoner.

From *Samba, A Story of the Congo.*



THE SUN DANCE of the SIOUX INDIANS

BY Dr MACAULAY

At full moon in the month of June each year, a grand festival is held by the Sioux Indians in honour of, and as a propitiation to the sun, to them the visible embodiment of the Great Spirit. If the hunter desires special good fortune in the chase, if the warrior hopes for revenge, if a relative is sick, if any favour is wished by an Indian from the Supreme Power which he recognizes and appeals to after his own barbarous fashion, he vows if the boon is granted to take part in the next Sun Dance. Many, indeed, participate from religious fanaticism alone, without any view to their own advantage, except in a general way.

In the year 1878 the Sun Dance of the Sioux nation was held about twelve miles from Fort R——. A small party of officers stationed there determined to see if it was possible to gain admission to the ceremonies. In the early morning a light wagon, drawn by four stout little ponies, climbed the steep hills behind the garrison, and gaining the flat table-land of the upper prairie, halted, after a rapid drive, at Seven Mile Spring, a little oasis, known far and wide to frontier travellers as the spot where weary man and beast can find shady trees and cool fresh water. Again on the road, the gay party dashed down into deep ravines, climbed steep bluffs, pushed down into a ravine again, then on between high hills. All the surface of the country gave proof that in past ages it had been the scene of tremendous upheavals and outbursts of volcanic energy.

At last, on one of the huge mounds, appeared the form of a horseman waving a scarlet blanket, whilst his pony executed curvets and caracoles which testified to the rider's skilful horsemanship. One of the military scouts went forward to the Indian to discover the meaning of this demonstration, and found the man had been sent out four miles to direct the "pale faces" to the camp, the Sioux having learned of the intended visit by means of the perfect system of espionage exercised over the whites all through the Indian country. Guided by this warrior, decked out in paint and feathers, the travellers soon reached a point from which they beheld a wild and picturesque scene.

The valley far below, or as these wide open spaces between hills are called, "the bottom," was covered for miles with lines of teepees, or wigwams. The central point of the camp was the vast amphitheatre where the Sun Dance was to be performed. Five or six chiefs, elaborately costumed, approached the wagon as it entered the camp, and shook hands with their guests with great dignity, uttering the peculiar guttural "how," the all-expressive word of salute and welcome. Two white tents were pitched, buffalo robes, blankets, and provisions sheltered therein, and half-a-dozen white men found themselves "at home" in a camp of six thousand Sioux Indians. As they stood gazing at the village which placidly basked in the fierce summer sun, groups of fantastic figures continually passed to and from the open area, which the next day was to be at once the place of worship and the scene of torture.

The tents of those who were to take part in the dance were ranged in a circle. For three days each man must be secluded in his little hut, without food or water, and subjected to a continual steam bath. This is prepared by immersing large stones in boiling water, and permitting the steam to evaporate in the closed hut, the occupant being rolled in heavy buffalo robes to facilitate perspiration.

The first day of the festival is devoted to the "cutting of the pole." Certain Indians, deputed for the purpose, take charge of the ceremony, which is preceded by "making medicine," a sacred mystery which no white man is allowed to witness. After this observance is concluded, all the men of the tribe assist in collecting the logs and brushwood which form the outer wall of the arena. The active ponies dart hither and thither in the bushes, the riders cutting branches with their belt knives, and fastening them in some way to their person, until they resemble a moving forest on their return to camp. Stakes are driven into the ground describing a large circle, an opening being left at one side; and the brushwood is woven in between these stakes so as to form a dense wall around the enclosure. The pole, forty feet high, is selected from a number of others by certain Indians, and then cut down and transported to the grounds by two maidens. After the top has been gaily trimmed with feathers, greens, and flowers, four ropes are attached a little more than half-way up, which, when stretched out, reach the ground about twenty-eight feet from the base of the pole.

Before the dance begins criers go throughout the camp, summoning all the people to come to look at the "holy thing, the beautiful thing." Then the dancers are led from their huts, covered from head to foot with buffalo robes, to look at the scene of their trial on the next day.

Before the true Sun Dance commences the Indians engage in many wild and curious ceremonies which are preliminary to the main performance, and work themselves into a state of the fiercest fanaticism. These exercises consist in the main of dancing, beating the tomtom, singing, and grotesque physical contortions.

Early on the morning of the second day the camp was astir, and the amphitheatre crowded with eager spectators. The white visitors were presented to the great chief, Spotted Tail, who had not shown himself before. He received them with dignity, and ordered seats to be prepared for the accommodation of the strangers. Many times they wished themselves far distant from those comfortable blanket-cushions before the cruel scenes of the day were over.

The ceremonies were opened by twenty-five warriors on their horses, gorgeous in finery and war-paint, filing into the arena, bringing with them a child. The little one was seated on a pony, led by its father; following it came the mother. The father informed the master

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of the ceremonies that he would give the pony the child was riding, and the mother would give the blanket she wore, to the Indian who would cut holes in the child's ears. This offer was made known to the audience by the master of ceremonies. At once some Indian, only too delighted at the chance of cutting anything, although not indifferent to the pony and blanket, stepped forward, and with his sharp knife cut a hole in each of the child's ears. After the ears had been slit, a piece of cloth, twisted into round cord-like shape, was thrust through the wound to ensure an opening for ornaments after it should have healed. Of course, during this painful and barbarous performance the poor papoose screamed with pain and fright, but its cries were drowned by the hooting, yelling, and singing of surrounding braves and squaws. This was continued until all the youngsters present had undergone the operation.

Following this came a grand drill and review, in which four hundred warriors, distinguished for bravery or cruelty, took part. These men were magnificently dressed; they were divided into squads, stationed at different points of the arena; but instead of the ordinary evolutions of a military drill, the performance consisted of singing and dancing to monotonous music made by measured strokes upon a drum, and the beating with sticks upon a dry beef hide stretched on the ground.

At a given signal Chief Spotted Tail arose with as much dignity as any feudal lord among his vassals, walked slowly round the circle and inspected the men, carrying in his hand a stick three or four feet long, on the end of which was fastened a scalp of long auburn hair, evidently taken from some white woman. As he passed round the circle he used the scalp and stick as a *baton*, and as he moved it to and fro the line of braves would advance or retreat, dancing, singing, and hooting incessantly. It may be here remarked that Spotted Tail, who presided over this orgie, and directed the movements of his warriors by waving a white woman's scalp, holds the commission of lieutenant in the United States Army, and every month draws from the people's treasury the sum of 150 dollars.

At another signal the braves suddenly broke their lines, rushed to their ponies picketed near by, and in an incredibly short time they came tearing up the valley, formed in solid column, the thundering of hoofs shaking the earth beneath them. As they approached the wide entrance to the arena, the column separated into two parts; these again into two, and again and again, until the eye failed to follow the intricate convolutions, and the moving mass resembled a gaudy kaleidoscope. Upon the conclusion of this cavalry review, during which the braves performed the most difficult feats of horsemanship, the Sun Dance proper began.

Forty-seven Indians had volunteered to submit themselves to this inhuman rite. The dancers were brought into the arena one at a time, each attended by his relatives. As he entered he raised his hand in adoration of the sun before he advanced to and embraced the sacred pole. Their only clothing was a breech-cloth. One fine stalwart youth was so overcome by the prospect of his approaching torture, that, as he embraced the pole and leaned his head upon his folded arms, his whole frame trembled and heaved with emotion. Instantly he recovered his stoicism, and took his place in the row of dancers with an unmoved countenance. At a sign from Spotted Tail the dancer lay down on his back, his head touching the foot of the pole. Two slits, about four inches long and half-an-inch apart, were then cut in each breast; the skin between the wounds was torn from the flesh, and a strong, hard wood stick thrust in; and to the ends of this stick the ropes fastened to the pole were securely tied. When thus prepared, the dancer sprang to his feet, the blood streaming down from his wounds; slits were also made under the shoulder-blades, and in the backs of the hands, and sticks thrust through. In this condition, with a whistle between his teeth, upon which he blew unceasingly, the victim, or rather the fanatic, began to dance, amid the most unearthly din; drums beating, whistles screaming, six thousand throats hooting, yelling, and singing, and he keeping his eyes fixed upon the sun during the whole time of his ordeal. If he lowered his eyes, or turned them aside from the dazzling blaze, some Indians reflected the rays into his face from small looking-glasses. While he dances, his hands are outstretched, and at intervals he rushes backwards, and throws his whole weight upon the rope which is fastened to his breast. This he must continue until the skin gives way, and the sticks are torn from the wounds. Before this is accomplished the skin is raised from the flesh over the entire breast, and the blood flows freely from the ugly wounds. In some instances nine hours have passed before the dancer could tear himself loose, but on this occasion the longest time of endurance was two hours and a half.

One rather slender youth gave tokens of exhaustion in a short time after being fastened to the pole. He tottered from side to side, and was in such a state of nervous excitement that the pulsations of his heart could be distinctly seen at a distance of several feet. His mother, an old squaw, shrivelled and wrinkled, came forward and took her place beside him ; she began to sing first a war song, then praises of her son's bravery, and exhortations to fortitude, finally promises of gifts and honours if he came triumphantly forth from the ordeal. The young man persevered for a time, but it was a most painful exhibition.

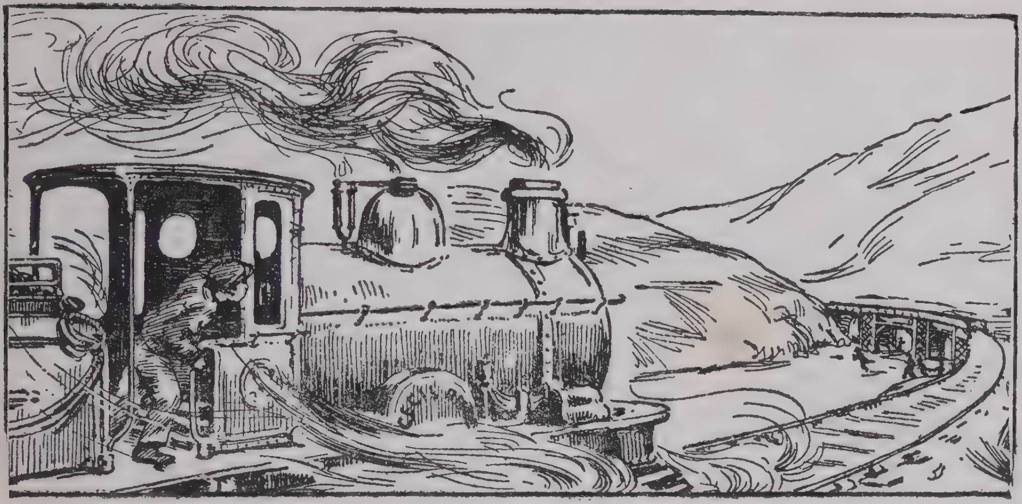
Many of the dancers became faint before their vow was fulfilled, and could not throw themselves against the rope with sufficient force to break away. But to fail is lifelong disgrace ; the brave who succumbs to physical anguish must have his hair cut close to his head, and must be banished and disowned by his tribe ; so the dancers persist, stimulated now and again by a looker-on stepping up and spitting on them.

When it became apparent that a dancer would not by his own efforts succeed in breaking loose, one of his friends clasped him around the waist and dragged him backward, until the thongs burst from his flesh and he fell exhausted on the earth. Then the ragged skin was trimmed off and his wounds dressed with pieces of charcoal. After a short rest he would join in the dance around the outer circle, which is continued until all who have volunteered have undergone the torture.

The dance is continued from two to three days. During this time the dancers are kept entirely without food or drink ; but at the conclusion of the ceremonies a grand feast is celebrated. Ponies, blankets, and skins are then given to the dancers, and they are treated with all imaginable honours.

As an exhibition of human fortitude under privation and intense physical agony, the Sun Dance of the Sioux is perhaps unequalled in this age of the world. But it is very sad to have to record the continuance of ceremonies so barbarous and repulsive, in connection with religious belief or social life. Let us hope that these poor Sioux may come under the better teaching which has exerted a civilizing influence on other Indian nations.

From *Grey Hawk.*



HIS FATHER'S HONOUR

By CAPTAIN CHARLES GILSON

Michael Barrett had a special belief of his own: that a railway engine could speak. This much he had discovered among the hills between Glen Garry and Dalnaspidal, in the very north of Perthshire, before he had ever heard of Bushman's Hook.

"Every engine can *think*," said Michael, "from the day it first leaves the shed; but it's a matter of about three months afore they begin to *talk*. At Struan, on the Highland Line, they look up towards the Drumouchter Pass an' say they *can't-do*-IT, an' them's the very words they use, putting the accent on the 'it.' Then, you must coax 'em; you must be kind. Often enough have I crawled up those hills and thought the old engine would never have the breath to reach the top. An' if they do, it's due to the driver as much as the man who makes 'em; but the bulk of the credit goes to the engine herself."

He was a big, broad-shouldered man with a kindly, wrinkled face. Except upon railway matters he seldom spoke, but upon that one topic it was hard to make him cease; for, if it was ever the case with any man, his heart was in his work.

When the Eastern Branch of the Cape Government Ra Michael opened, the authorities wished to furnish the line w lazily across experienced drivers they could get, and not unnaturally they went to the Highland Railway to buy the best men off; for they also had mountains enough to climb.

Michael was loath to leave Scotland ; but he had his wife and children to consider, and the pay that was offered him in the colonies sounded exceptionally good.

So off they went to the Cape, Michael and his wife and his two children, Jimmy and May. Jim was at that time only a very little boy ; but even in his earliest days his father had taken him on his knee and told him how an engine should be treated " with kindness and respect," and the only fairy stories he had ever heard were wonderful tales of the permanent way.

They lived in South Africa at Stormberg Junction, for Barrett was often worked on the Steynsburg line. Here, as before in Scotland, they were in the heart of the mountains, the main difference being that in Cape Colony the children frequently never saw their father for days. The distance from Perth to Inverness was but as nothing in the vast tracts of country through which the Government Railway passed; and Michael soon found that if the pay was better, the work was harder and the hours longer in such proportion that the Government lost nothing worthy of mention over the deal. But Michael Barrett was the last man living to care a rap for that. Though at first he had been almost heart-broken at having to leave his home, he soon found a friend that in course of time became very dear to his heart. This was the " Cecil Rhodes," a little, small-wheeled, hill-climbing engine, specially designed for the line.

With the " Cecil Rhodes " Michael had only a single fault to find, and that was in her name. It should have been " Cecilia " ; it was preposterous, he said, to name an engine after a man. Whereupon he would be at the greatest pains to explain the essentially feminine character of engines, expressing the concluding opinion that general managers, directors and chairmen, or whoever it was gave the names to engines, were, without exception, fools. It was afterwards explained that Cecil Rhodes was the great pioneer of South African enter-
ad done more than any man living to open up the country

and make it what it was; and this, in time, reconciled Michael to the name of his charge.

They lived in a little house near the junction, overtopped by poplars and hidden in a corner of the hills. From East London to Stormberg the railroad runs north through a vast and seemingly illimitable country that is intersected by great mountain barriers a hundred miles in length. Through the cloud-wrapped passes the engines are forced to toil; and on gaining each summit, a higher tableland is reached, that stretches far to the north, where still another range stands out against the sky.

At Bushman's Hook in the Bamboes Mountains, twenty miles south of Stormberg, the final stage is reached. Thence, further north, for more than three hundred miles, lies the open, brown and rolling veldt. It is as if the country to the south had been once the mighty staircase of a giant who had been in the habit of striding backwards and forwards between the great brown tableland and the sea, and who had built the mountains for his ease. The final step, at Bushman's Hook, is the greatest of them all.

At the foot of the slope there is a little, lonely pumping station, where the engines pause for water before attempting to do the climb. The pumping station is situated by the side of an open " pan " or pond, watered by a bounding stream that comes down the mountain-side; and across this stream there is thrown a well-made metal bridge. All of which is minutely concerned with the history of the Barretts and the little, small-wheeled engine that was called the " Cecil Rhodes."

In the year 1899 Jim Barrett was fourteen years of age, and his little sister May was still a child. The boy had already done several trips on his father's engine, and there was nothing that pleased him more. He already thoroughly understood the working of the thing, and could tell you more of an engine than many a fireman working on the road. His father was looking forward to the time when he could take Jim with him as his own fireman; and he was in this state of paternal pride and expectation when there began to be talk of trouble between the Dutch and English and a declaration of war.

The British settlers had never overloved the Dutch, and Michael was no exception to the rule. A man who could amble lazily across the veldt astride of a ewe-necked pony, in preference to sitting behind an engine like the "Cecil Rhodes," he regarded as nothing short of a fool. It disgusted Michael. "Here," he would cry in disgust, "we've gone an' brought engines into the land—modern and up-to-date locomotives with all the latest patents and inventions—an' they prefer to jolt over the ant-hills in a wagon, behind sixteen head of oxen, at the rate of twelve miles a day—six miles in the morning and six in the evening, an' outspanned for half the day to feed. But an engine," he would add, holding up a forefinger and regarding his audience from out of the corner of his eyes, "an engine you can feed as you go along an' fill her with as much water in five minutes as an ox would care to swallow in a year." For with Michael Barrett all men were judged by the love they showed for the railroad, and on this account the Boers were held of little worth.

But, as every one knows, there were graver reasons than that. There was a long story of oppression from Johannesburg, appeals to the Home Government, vows broken and promises never kept: all of which led up to a three years' war.

Michael Barrett heard the news that war was imminent as he came over the frontier at Bethulie Bridge in the "Cecil Rhodes"; and that night, when he entered his cottage, his face was troubled and grave.

He took off his cap and flung it into a chair. His wife and children were seated around the fire.

"Old woman," said he, with a heavy sigh, "there's a deal o' trouble ahead."

"Are they going to fight, Michael?" asked his wife anxiously.

"No doubt of it. An ultimatum is signed. They've gone too far to change their minds; an' it's my belief that they have meant to fight us all the time."

He went to the door and flung it open, and stood on the threshold, watching the sun sinking behind the mountains and flooding the veldt with gold.

Some three hundred yards down the little minor valley where their house was situated was the railway station, and in the siding, resting after her labours, lay the little "Cecil Rhodes."

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Beyond the station, on the slopes of the Rooikop, which towered above the neighbouring hills, was Jan Potgeiter's farm; and Jan Potgeiter was known to be a rebel in his heart. As Michael Barrett looked, he saw him come out of the farm-house, with a rifle slung across his shoulders, and ride off towards the north.

The engine-driver, from the door of his cottage, followed the man with his eye. Half-way down the valley he was met by another man, who had come from the other side of the hills, and whom Michael was able to recognize in the distance as one Hans Pinnear, who for months past had been openly boasting of his hatred of the British. The two Boers joined each other; and then, setting off on their Cape ponies at an amble across the veldt, they were soon lost in the falling shades of night. And all this within view of a great British camp which lay under the Kissieberg, within two months to be the scene of one of the most sanguinary disasters of the war—General Gatacre's memorable assault upon the Stormberg hills.

Michael Barrett turned back into his cottage with his heart as heavy as lead. It was not of himself that he was thinking, it was of his wife and his youngest child. Jim, he knew, was well enough able to take care of himself; but May was only eight years old and delicate in health, a nervous, sensitive child, little framed by nature to face the horrors and hardships of a war.

At daybreak on the following morning, Michael was up. He walked over to the railway station, and there he found the station-master with a telegram in his hand.

"Morning, Mike," said he. "They've stopped the express. She's coming no further than Queenstown."

Queenstown was sixty miles to the south and well garrisoned by troops.

Michael said nothing.

"You're to take your engine south," the station-master went on. "They'll want all the rolling-stock they can get. I expect they'll use Queenstown as a base and fill it full of supplies."

"I'll come back here, I suppose?" asked Barrett anxiously, thinking again of his wife and child.

"Sure to," answered the other. "There are twenty trucks at

Steynsburg, and there's no other engine available between Burghersdorp and Sterkstroom but yours. I wouldn't worry, Mike; there's plenty of time as yet."

Barrett went down to his engine; his fireman was there already, and had her under steam.

In a few minutes the "Cecil Rhodes" moved down the line, running under Michael's able hands as smoothly as a billiard ball, with never a sign of smoke.

The line curved and curled around the hills until it reached the low-lying "nek" and dropped down upon the open plain beyond. Twenty miles' run across the open stretch of veldt, in the centre of which lies the township of Molteno, and they began to climb the northern slopes of Bushman's Hook.

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"*I-can't-do-*IT—*can't-do-*IT—*can't-do-*IT," groaned the silly little engine, dragging itself up the steep incline. And there was Michael Barrett, smiling his answer, "Of course you can! You done it with a line o' coal-trucks behind you, and you can do it all by yourself." Of which, of course, there was never a shadow of doubt.

The engine came over the rise by Phillips' farm, and there was the great deserted plain below, laid out mile upon mile, with Pen Hook to the east and the hills of the Tarkstad Valley to the west, and to the south far away in the distance another mountain-barrier stretched across the view.

If the northern slope had been long and steep the southern one was trebly so, for the Molteno plain lay a thousand feet above the level of that to the south. Michael Barrett, coming down the slope, made ample use of his brake.

At the foot of the hill she rattled merrily over the pumping station bridge. The water was high and muddy, for there had been a shower in the hills.

Outside Sterkstroom Barrett let out a short, sharp whistle. The one man on the station platform drew back under the newly-painted wooden shed that did service as a waiting-room; the engine rushed through, and the dust rising in little tempestuous eddies blinded the man in the eyes.

"That's Mike Barrett," said he. But before he was able to look again the engine was out of sight. It was the life that Michael Barrett loved.

As he drew near to Queenstown he slowed down, and pulled up against the platform as gently as a boat with oars shipped glides into an opened lock.

There he heard the news: war had been declared. Already the station was in the hands of the military authorities, and the town was under martial law.

The station-master was accompanied by a railway staff-officer, with red tabs and a pair of glistening spurs.

"Where have you come from?" asked the officer.

"Stormberg, sir," answered the driver.

" Then you'll have to go back again. There's a train-load of stores, ammunition and hospital comforts to go up to the junction immediately. You will find a railway staff-officer there, and he'll take charge of the freight. Then you must get off on the Steynsburg line and bring down all the rolling-stock you can find. The station-master at Steynsburg wires that he has twenty trucks there. You must bring these south without delay. We want all the rolling-stock we can beg, borrow or steal. If you're tired we can easily send another man ; but yours is the only engine we've got."

" Thank you, sir," said Michael, " but I'd rather go myself."

" All right," said the officer. " We can't give you an escort ; we've not a man to spare. Did you see any Boers on the way ? "

Michael said he had not.

" Good," said the officer. " They are collecting at Burhgersdorp. You've nothing at all to fear."

Michael felt inclined to say that it would make very little difference to him if he had ; but he held his peace, and backed the engine into the siding where lay the loaded train. In ten minutes he was again upon the line, going north along the same track. But this time it was altogether a different affair. The " Cecil Rhodes " had a heavy load behind her ; and Michael stopped at the pumping station for water before attempting to climb the slope.

By now the afternoon was far advanced ; and it took the engine hours to gain the summit of the hill. Thence, she came down upon the higher plateau, running easily enough, and passed Molteno as the sun was setting on the veldt. There was no one on the platform, and Michael wondered why. He had seen the station-master on his way down. But now, the place was utterly deserted.

Two miles further on, looking out across the plain to the east, Michael Barrett's eyes were confronted by the most surprising spectacle they had ever seen. He was taking a large train-load of ammunition and supplies to the British force at Stormberg ; and there, far in the distance, a long dust-beridden column was stretched across the veldt, moving towards the south.

He slowed the engine down. As he did so the head of the force disappeared amongst a group of "kopjes"; and gradually the whole length of the column followed suit like a long khaki snake gliding into a hole.

Then night fell. Not as it does in England, but coming down quickly, like a dark, impenetrable curtain upon a transformation scene in orange, purple and gold.

Michael Barrett for the first time in his life found himself in a dilemma. What was he to do?

Past a doubt the column that he had seen disappear among the hills was the British garrison of the very place whither he was bound. And yet his orders had been explicit: he was to run the train to Stormberg, where he would find a railway staff-officer who would take charge of all the freight. Clearly, on his own initiative, he could not very well disobey. And yet he felt that he was not doing right.

He put on all steam ahead, and quickly covering the intervening miles, ran over the Kissieberg gap above the junction of the Steynsburg and East London lines.

His worst fears were realized at a glance. There was not a single camp-fire upon the slope of the hill, where the British force had been stationed. The station-master was gone; but Jim came running on to the platform, very much out of breath.

"Get back, father!" cried the boy excitedly. "The Boers are in the place."

"Are all the troops gone?" asked Michael.

"Every one," cried Jim. "They got sudden orders, and marched out at two o'clock this afternoon; and soon after sunset a commando came in from Burghersdorp. They are camped behind the hill."

"You are right, my boy," said the engine-driver gravely; "I must get back without delay."

They stood together upon the platform under the only station lamp. Michael Barrett gave one glance in the direction of his cottage. He could see the light burning brightly in the window through the darkness that was cast upon the veldt. He hesitated for an instant, knowing full well that he was crossing with the "Cecil Rhodes" to the side of his friends, and leaving his wife and little daughter unprotected in the hands of the enemy. Then he went down to his engine with a firm and steady step.

The whole veldt was inordinately still. He could discern faintly in the darkness of the night the glow of the fires from the laager of the Dutch behind the hill to the east of the Rooikop.

With Jim's assistance he uncoupled the engine and ran her down the line. Crossing at the points, he came back again to the other end of the train; and as he did so he heard the hoofs of horses galloping across the veldt and coming nearer and nearer in the night. A party of men were riding in from the enemy's laager. He had not a second to lose.

He could not join on to the train, which he knew contained a large and valuable supply of the necessities of war, while the guiding rails were against him; and he called out loudly to Jim to come down the line with all haste and put the lever across. His cry was answered by a shout from the Boers, who at that moment rode their ponies on to the platform itself.

By the light of the station lamp he could see Jim running between the rails; and at his heels a mounted Dutchman, who quickly caught him up and took the boy from behind by the collar of his coat.

Without another thought Michael Barrett sprang from his engine and rushed towards the points. To turn the lever over was the work of a second; and then, running back to the engine, he backed her down the line into the very station itself, which was crowded with the Boers.

It was a hopeless effort from the start. His idea had been to spring off upon the platform and thence between the rails and join the engine to the trucks. But no sooner had he set his foot upon the ground than a man, whom in the light of the lantern he instantly recognized as Jan Potgeiter, seized him by the throat.

The engine-driver was a man of Herculean strength, and with one blow he felled the Dutchman to the ground. But no sooner had he done so than two others had seized his wrists and a third was sprawled across his back.

He struggled desperately to free himself; but from the very first sheer weight of numbers overcame his strength. He found himself stretched helpless on the ground with his hands bound behind his back.

They led him into the little waiting-room, roofed with corrugated iron. There one of the Dutchmen lit a lantern and placed it on the seat that ran around the walls.

When the light burned up the first thing Michael saw was his son, also bound hand and foot.

The men were nearly all local Boers : the Field-Cornet, a Burghersdorp man, was the only one that Michael had never seen.

"My friend," said the Field-Cornet, speaking in Dutch, which the Englishman understood very well, "you will have to drive your engine out to Steynsburg and bring in all the rolling-stock that is upon the line. We will want it over the Orange River to bring the commandos food and horses and men."

But Michael Barrett only shook his head.

"Am I to understand you won't?"

"Yes," said Barrett in Dutch. "You are."

"Then," remarked the other, "it only remains for me to force you to do it."

"And that," said Barrett, "you cannot do."

The Dutchman looked a trifle perturbed.

"Tut, tut," said he, "we'll pay you well enough."

"I don't doubt it," was the answer.

"Come, now, do as we ask you. Take your engine along the Steynsburg line."

Barrett said nothing; but he thought that if once he got aboard the engine he would take her down to Queenstown at sixty miles an hour.

The Field-Cornet guessed his thought.

"Ha, ha," he cried, "you think you would prefer to join the other side?"

"I think nothing," said Barrett; "but this much I know: I am paid by the Cape Government and take no orders from you. I am not your servant and my engine is not your property."

But the Field-Cornet cut him short.

"Possession," said he, "is the law. If you refuse to obey me, I hold you here a prisoner, and the red-coats are at least a driver short. And, from all I hear," he added, "an exceedingly good one at that."

"I want no compliments from a Dutchman," said Barrett gruffly.

"Good," said the other; "for that's the last you're likely to get. Bind him up tighter, Jan, gag his mouth and leave him here for the night."

Jan Potgeiter obeyed his orders readily enough; for Michael Barrett was a man he had never liked, and when he had finished, the engine-driver was able neither to speak nor move.

"Hans," said the Field-Cornet, turning to another man, "you understand something about steam-engines, don't you?"

"Not enough to drive one," was the quick rejoinder.

The Field-Cornet gave a grunt of disapproval.

"We must get those trucks in somehow," said he. "I know what!" he cried, as the thought came suddenly to his mind. "We'll take this Englishman down to-morrow and force him to drive it with a revolver at his head."

The Field-Cornet laughed. But Michael Barrett only turned upon his side.

"And, Hans," went on the Boer commander, "you must keep the engine under steam throughout the night. You can do that, I suppose?"

"Ja," was the heavy answer.

"Good. Those twenty trucks will be wanted. There's no time to lose; we must start at daybreak without fail. I'll see to it myself."

He turned and was about to go, when Jan Potgeiter called him back.

"What are you going to do with the boy?" asked Jan.

The Field-Cornet thought for a moment.

"Bring him along with us," he said, "and on second thoughts you had better bring the father too. There's no knowing but one of his Kaffirs, or even his wife for the matter of that, might help him to escape. But two of you men had best stay behind in the station to keep an eye on the train. We don't need a regular guard; all the red-necked English are fled."

At that they untied the legs of father and son, though still their hands were bound. They led them within a few yards of their own home, over the slope of the hill and down into the great Boer laager on the other side.

Once in the camp Barrett's legs were again bound together, and Jim was led off and placed under the charge of an old Boer with whom he used to go out on shooting parties.

"Old Piet!" cried Jim in astonishment. "I thought at least that *you* were going to be loyal!"

Piet slowly took his pipe from his mouth and gave his shoulders a shrug.

"What is the use ?" said he. "The English are going to be beaten. The Lord is on our side."

And at that he gave the boy some coffee and some food.

When they had finished the meal Piet bound his prisoner's feet. But, since the boy had no inclination to sleep, they sat and talked far into the night, while the camp-fires, one after the other, died down into a host of glowing embers, showing red upon the hillside like a hundred scarlet eyes.

"You won't stay here long," said Jim confidently.

"Why ?" asked the old man in all simplicity.

"Because the red-coats will turn you out."

Little did the boy dream how many weary months would elapse before the British would force the last of the great mountain ranges that barred their way to the north.

"You are wrong," said Piet. "All the English will be driven into the sea. The President himself has said so. Ja."

Jim laughed loyally.

"I should not be surprised," said he, "if they rail a force of British infantry up to Molteno and attack you from there before you are ready."

"That," said Piet briefly, "is impossible."

"Why ?"

"Because a party of men went out this evening to blow up the pumping-station bridge at Bushman's Hook. It will be destroyed at daybreak. Ja."

Jim said nothing. Though he had no doubt as to what the end of it all would be, he felt that at least the Boers were striking first.

"And now," continued the old Dutchman, "it is time we went to sleep, for the morning is drawing near. Good-night, my young friend. We must all thank your father for bringing us a train-load of such excellent ammunition and supplies. It will be very useful to us. The commandant is pleased."

With that, old Piet turned over upon his side, and in a few minutes was snoring hard.

But his last sentence rankled in the mind of the boy. It was no fault of his father's, he knew; yet it pained him greatly to think that he should have been the innocent means of the Boers making such a capture at the very outset of the war. It was to him as if his father's honour was at stake. He grew feverish and restless under the thought, making no attempt to fall asleep. Indeed, he could nohow be comfortable for a moment, seeing his feet and hands were tightly bound. He moved from side to side, and working himself into anger, tried in vain to move his arms.

Suddenly he felt the cord around his wrists begin to give. Locking his fingers, he tried to force his arms apart; and once again the knot tightened with a jerk, and the loop widened the fraction of an inch. Old Piet had been ever a careless soul.

Encouraged by this success, he made a series of frantic efforts, so paining his wrists that he thought that he must have caused the blood to flow.

Then, once again, he tried to move his hands. He found he could almost withdraw one of his thumbs from underneath the cord, and this after a great deal of difficulty he succeeded in doing. The rest, he knew, was easy; it only remained for him to be careful that he was not seen.

He slipped his right hand free, and the left soon followed suit. Old Piet was sleeping soundly. The fires had burned very low across the hillside, and many were altogether out. He could hear only the ponies, tied to the wagon wheels, snorting from time to time and restlessly pawing the ground.

As quick as thought he untied the knot in the rope that bound his feet, and he was free—but in the midst of the enemy's camp.

He looked around him: everywhere were the forms of sleeping men.

To pass unseen from their midst was a thing that was hardly possible: there were sure to be sentries about, and some few at least of the Boers would be bound to be awake. Turning all this over in his mind, Jim came to the conclusion that the boldest course would be the safest in the end.

He got quickly to his feet and slipped behind a Cape cart that was near. Thence he walked boldly through the laager, stepping over the prostrate forms of the sleeping men.

The camp was already growing light, and the outline of a jagged mountain range was beginning to stand out against the eastern sky.

Several of the Boers were already up and moving about the camp. One even spoke to Jim, and the boy answered, as briefly as he could, in Dutch. There were several quite young lads in the commando; as he had hoped, he was taken for one of these. Without a doubt had he attempted to creep away unseen he would have been suspected at once. But, as he knew, the commando had only just been gathered together, and it was not likely that they knew each other by sight. Also, the prisoners, father and son—the very first British prisoners taken in all a three years' war—had been brought in after dark.

All this Jim had thought of: he had seen wherein lay his only chance of escape; and in the half light of the growing dawn he managed to make his way in safety to the outskirts of the camp.

Thence he set off towards the railway station as fast as his legs could carry him. He passed close to his home, and thought of his mother and how anxious she would be for them both. He knew that she had never tried to sleep that night; and he was sorely tempted, as his father had been, to go in and reassure her. But it would be a pitiful waste of time, and Jim Barrett had a most colossal scheme at the back of his little head.

When he reached the station he was relieved to find that the two men who had been left behind as sentinels were both still fast asleep.

The lamp still burned upon the platform. The morning light, step by step, was creeping up the hills, and already caught the glittering metals running over the Stormberg pass, as it were, into the light of coming day. In the station lay the train, and at its head the "Cecil Rhodes," already under steam, and literally boiling to be off.

Jim slipped down between the rails. His father had already backed the engine against the trucks. The coupling alone remained to be done.

This the boy set about with all dispatch. Unfortunately, while he was about it, he dropped one of the heavy chains, which, ringing out against the woodwork of the truck, woke the Boers who had been asleep upon the platform. They got lazily to their feet, as yet but half awake, and the boy could see them from between the engine and the truck.

Noiselessly, on the side of the train furthest from the platform, he crept to the engine footplate. The men as yet had no knowledge of his presence on the line.

Five minutes later, when one of the Boers had left the station building, going off to the spruit near at hand to fetch some water for his early morning coffee, after three tremendous "puffs" the "Cecil Rhodes" suddenly sent the couplers clanking and buffers banging down the length of the train. Three more—and the train slowly began to move. And then the little, restless engine began to talk, as Michael Barrett had always said she could.

The man in the station ran into the waiting-room to fetch his rifle, while the other down at the spruit cried out helplessly to his comrade to stop the train.

Several sentries, who had lain throughout the night among the rocks on the crest of the hills, showed up against the sky-line. They shouted wildly to one another, pointing towards the slowly moving train and frantically waving their arms above their heads. But all this was of no avail; Jim Barrett was the sole master of the situation; and the "Cecil Rhodes," with her long line of trucks, was creeping up the rise towards the southern pass.

The alarm spread to the camp like wild-fire; and the whole commando, mounted and under arms, came at a gallop over the crest of the hill, spreading out across the veldt like a charge of human shot, the hoofs of their ponies thundering after the train.

The "Cecil Rhodes" was taking the rise, and talking, as if she understood: "*I-can't-do-*IT—*I-can't-do-*IT," and every yard a groan. It was the heaviest collar work; and as yet she moved only at a snail's pace; while the Boer commando thundered in her wake.

By the time she had gained the saddle in the hills the bulk of the enemy were within effective range. The boy crouched low upon the footplate, while the hissing of the bullets sounded past his ears. By the time the engine was over the summit of the "nek" several horsemen were level with the trucks. Another fifty yards and all would have been lost. But no sooner was the " Cecil Rhodes " upon the downward slope than at every stroke of the piston-rod the load became lighter behind. For a few seconds it was an equal race, almost neck to neck; but it could not remain so long. The ponies were blowing from the gallop up the hill; but the little iron horse was only just beginning to warm to the work in hand. She rushed down the valley side like a boat down a water-chute, taking a minor ridge at the foot of the hills at a bound.

The open plain to Molteno lay before; there was a run of twenty miles to Bushman's Hook. The boy looked back and saw his pursuers one by one dropping from the chase. And then he blew the whistle. It was a shrill, wild, triumphant shriek as the train tore through the air, startling the plover from the grass and the spring-boks going down to the spruits for their early-morning drink.

Rushing madly onward the train sprang up the lower slopes of Bushman's Hook. The great lone mountains were deserted; it was as if there was nothing in all the world save Jim Barrett, his father's honour, and the little " Cecil Rhodes."

Half-way up the incline she began to feel the weight. The mountain side was steep; the track turned and twisted among the hills; and the engine groaned and grunted, crying out as if in pain. At every yard the weight of the over-loaded trucks all but dragged her back.

But Jim Barrett coaxed and nursed her as his father had shown it should be done; and at last she reached the hill-top and crept in among the clouds.

At this altitude Jim ran her slowly, for the way turned at alarming angles upon the brink of a precipice, whence he knew that he himself, the trucks with all their freight, and the little sturdy engine could be dashed to fragments thousands of feet below.

Then he came to an opening in the clouds, and looked back to the Stormberg hills across the plain. And there in the distance was the Boer commando, riding to the south.

He was wondering how bootless such a pursuit must be, when he suddenly remembered that the pumping-station bridge was blown up.

The boy felt his heart grow cold within him. All his efforts had been of no avail! Sick with disappointment, he began to descend the hill. It will be remembered that the southern slope of Bushman's Hook was the steepest and longest of them all. He kept on the brake, moving forward little faster than he had approached the summit from the other side.

Soon the engine emerged from the clouds; and the great stretch of open veldt, on which the town of Sterkstroom lies, lay spread beneath him as far as the eye could reach. And there, at the foot of Bushman's Hook, lay the pumping station; and, wonder of wonders, the bridge still spanned the spruit!

The boy, creeping along the side of the engine, screened his eyes with his hand. Far beneath him, out upon the veldt, was the British column, in a cloud of rolling dust, moving to the south. Nearer at hand were the figures of men, wearing black and not khaki coats, moving like ants in and out from under the arches of the pumping-station bridge.

As if in a flash the whole truth came in upon the boy. The bridge was to have been destroyed at daybreak: the Boers had feared to do so because the British troops on the line of march were camped too near at hand. Now, the column was well upon its way, and the men he could see were laying the mines before his eyes.

Without another thought he turned off the brake. The engine shot forward like an arrow from the bow; the couplers along the entire length of the trucks took the sudden weight of the engine, like a sudden rattle of musketry that went echoing through the hills. Then again, from sheer, mad, heedless joy, Jim blew the whistle, and the "Cecil Rhodes" and her burden, rocking and swaying on the mountain-side, went rushing headlong down the hill.

The irons hummed and throbbed behind her, the culverts trembled and the girders shook. The boy, at the engine side, shouted and yelled from pure excitement, while the wind of their fearful impetus so filled his mouth and nostrils that he found it hard to breathe.

They were nearing the bridge at a velocity such as is never reached by an express on any line in the world, when Jim saw the Dutchmen leave the arches and make off hastily across the veldt on either side of the line. Past a doubt the bridge was mined, the fuse was lit, and for Jim Barrett it was only a question of seconds between this world and the next.

Nevertheless, had he even wished to stop her he could not now have done it. Had he put on the brake the whole train would have been thrown from the rails. But no such thought was in his mind. Mad with excitement, his cheeks burning from the wind, Jim climbed back to the footplate; while the engine shrieked defiance aloud and hurled her red-hot cinders from the track.

They came down towards the bridgeway like a hurricane. They were flying to glory, or else to certain death.

At the base of the slope the wheels of the engine came upon the first girders of the bridge with a hollow thud that sounded far across the veldt; and then the trucks crossed, one behind the other, with a noise like that of the rolling of a muffled drum.

They were over in an instant. They were travelling still at a mad, impetuous pace. And then it was as if a peal of thunder had rent the mountain-side. A mighty charge of dynamite had shivered the bridge from ramp to pier. The dust was caught in the wind of the train that had passed and rose high above the smoke of the engine in swaying, corkscrew eddies that floated far away.

Ten minutes later Jim Barrett's train drew up in Sterkstroom station, whither the British column was marching across the veldt.

An officer, with iron-grey hair and crossed swords upon his shoulder-straps, stood upon the platform. Another and younger officer was at his elbow. Both appeared to have just dismounted from their horses, which stood outside the station, held by an orderly who carried a flag upon a lance.

Jim sprang upon the platform, and the officer immediately called him to his side.

"Did you drive this train into Stormberg yesterday?" he asked.

"No, sir," answered Jim promptly. "My father did."

"Was he not stopped at Molteno?"

"No, sir. Molteno station is deserted. I think the station-master has been taken by the Boers."

The grey-haired officer seemed to be thinking.

"Then, tell me," he said, "how did you get away? The place is reported to be in the hands of the enemy."

"It is, sir," said Jim simply; "but I escaped."

"And brought the train with you?"

"Yes, sir," said Jim. "Have I done wrong?"

The elder soldier widely opened his eyes, and then turned to his companion.

"Rawson," said he, "did you see with those Zeiss glasses of yours how much there was to spare across that bridge?"

"I don't know, General," said the other. "It looked a matter of inches, but I suppose it must have been more."

The General turned once again to the boy. "Done wrong, my lad!" he exclaimed. "You've done right, and I'll see that you're rewarded; and this war won't last long if there are many of us who can do a thing like that."

But there were very few, so the war dragged on for years. Which mattered never a rap to Jim, for his father's honour was saved.

PIDGIN ENGLISH

Pidgin English, as every one knows, is the debased dialect in use in the Chinese ports as a means of communication between British merchants and the natives. It consists of common words, to which John Chinaman adds suffixes of his own like *-ee* and *-lo*, together with original inventions like *one-piecee* for the article *a*, and meaningless expletives such as *ch'hoy* and *galow*. Finding a difficulty with the letter *r* the Chinaman pronounces it as *l*.

The story goes that, in the course of a voyage from Nagasaki to San Francisco, a young lady, disliking the jargon, set herself to teach a Chinaman English pure and undefiled. She chose as the vehicle of instruction Dr. Watts' well-known poem beginning:—

How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower!

She carefully explained the meaning of each phrase as she went along. Being asked to recite the lines to show how he was progressing, the Chinaman chanted, in his sing-song voice:—

What-for one-piecee littee pidgy bee
Wantchee go workee allo bloomin dai-lo?
He go long smellum evely littee tlee:
Ch'hoy! catchee jam-jam, bimeby chop-chop[1] wai-lo.[2]

---

[1] quickly.

[2] went away.

THE HIGHWAYMAN

By ALFRED NOYES

Part One

I

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding—
        Riding—riding—
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

II

He'd a French cocked hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace at his chin,
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin;
They fitted with never a wrinkle: his boots were up to the thigh!
And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,
        His pistol butts a-twinkle,
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.

III

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard,
And he tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and barred;
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
        Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

IV

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked
Where Tim the ostler listened; his face was white and peaked;
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy hay,
But he loved the landlord's daughter,
        The landlord's red-lipped daughter;
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say—

V

"One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize to-night,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light;
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,
Then look for me by moonlight;
        Watch for me by moonlight;
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way."

VI

He rose upright in the stirrups; he scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair i' the casement! His face burnt like a brand
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast;
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,
        (Oh, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the West.

Part Two

I

He did not come in the dawning; he did not come at noon;
And out o' the tawny sunset, before the rise o' the moon
When the road was a gipsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,
A red-coat troop came marching—
        Marching—marching—
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

"THEY GAGGED HIS DAUGHTER AND BOUND HER TO THE FOOT OF HER NARROW BED"

II

They said no word to the landlord, they drank his ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter and bound her to the foot of her narrow bed;
Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at their side!
There was death at every window;
And hell at one dark window;
For Bess could see, through her casement, the road that *he* would ride.

III

They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest;
They had bound a musket beside her, with the barrel beneath her breast!
"Now keep good watch!" and they kissed her. She heard the dead man say—
Look for me by moonlight;
Watch for me by moonlight;
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!

IV

She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots held good!
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or blood!
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years,
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
Cold, on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!

V

The tip of one finger touched it; she strove no more for the rest!
Up, she stood up to attention, with the barrel beneath her breast,
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;
Blank and bare in the moonlight;
And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed to her love's refrain.

VI

Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot! Had they heard it? The horse-hoofs ringing clear;
Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot, in the distance? Were they deaf that they did not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,
The highwayman came riding,
        Riding, riding!
The red-coats looked to their priming! She stood up, straight and still!

VII

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence! *Tlot-tlot,* in the echoing night!
Nearer he came and nearer! Her face was like a light!
Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath,
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
        Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him—with her death.

VIII

He turned; he spurred to the Westward; he did not know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own red blood!
Not till the dawn he heard it, and slowly blanched to hear
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
        The landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.

IX

Back, he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him, and his rapier brandished high!
Blood-red were his spurs i' the golden noon; wine red was his velvet coat;

When they shot him down on the highway,
        Down like a dog on the highway,
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with a bunch of lace at his throat.

. . . . . .

X

And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
A highwayman comes riding—
        Riding—riding—
A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.

XI

Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard;
And he taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred;
He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
        Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

OCEAN LINERS PAST AND PRESENT

By FRANK H. MASON, R.B.A.

The ocean liner of to-day is very truly to be numbered amongst the wonders of modern civilization. Yet the latest and largest of the giant Atlantic record-breakers might very reasonably be cited by the cynic as proof of the adage that there is nothing new under the sun. If the fables of ancient writers are to receive any credence at all, some of the vessels of bygone ages must have come very near to equalling, if not, indeed, surpassing, the modern ocean liner, in the extent to which they catered for the luxury of their age.

As simple ships, denuded of all appurtenances, they would hardly bear comparison, perhaps. Steam turbines the ancients knew not, nor had they learned the use to which screws (despite the skill of Archimedes) could be put for the propulsion of a vessel through water. Their leviathans were driven not by quadruple screws, but by quadruple, or at least triple, banks of oars, and that at least they were as lavish over this part of a ship's equipment as circumstances would permit is evident from the fact that 400 rowers and more were employed together.

But so far as concerns internal arrangements for the comfort and well-being of passengers, the pleasure-ship of the ancients, if at all resembling the descriptions written of it, must have been, when the difference between ancient and modern phases of civilization is considered, in advance of even the most sybaritic of our floating palaces. When we stumble upon an account of a towering vessel which contained, in addition to all the apartments of a royal residence, banqueting-halls, gymnasia, fountains, and fish-ponds, stables, baths, mills, and a temple to Venus, we rub our eyes, and wonder if the *Lusitania* is such a very wonderful creation after all, and whether the directors of the Cunard

Company had not better resume their studies of the ancients and glean a few hints from Heiro and Ptolemy Philopater. When we read, further, that the temple of Venus was inlaid with mosaic of agate and precious stones, that the poops were encrusted with rubies and other gems, and that the ports (they must surely have been windows in those days) were embellished with paintings on ivory, we feel that a first-class berth on the most sumptuous of our vaunted Atlantic ferry-boats is but shoddy accommodation indeed! We fancy we are in the lap of luxury when we take a book from the shelves of the steamer's library and retire for a quiet half-hour in a nook amongst the spreading palms with which that apartment is tastefully adorned. But the ancient traveller had his library, too, and as for palms, he had vines and fruit-trees blooming on board, so sedulously cultivated that each was supplied with water from a special conduit.

This interesting information, and much more, the diligent chroniclers of old have recorded, with a praiseworthy attention to detail, in writings which the curious may read for themselves. Only one thing is needful to a proper enjoyment and appreciation of such narratives—a grain of salt!

A scarcely less striking, and historically much more truthful contrast in the methods of sea-travel belonging to different eras, is to be obtained by a comparison of life on board the modern 30,000 ton cross-Atlantic liner and the condition of affairs on a vessel of an early passenger line in the days before the sailing-ship was finally ousted, after a brave but losing fight, by the steam-ship, just as on land the stage-coach was ousted by the railway.

The wild west winds of the Atlantic made the outward voyage in the old sailing-packets a difficult and often a long one. A ship literally fought its way westward in those days, gaining, perhaps, in one day a bare fifty miles to windward after extreme difficulty, and only by dint of sheer battling with the elements holding the advantage thus hardly won.

The only merit of this westerly weather was that the ship's decks were kept fairly clean by the constant wash of the sea coming aboard. Often the packet was crowded with emigrants, and the conditions of life aboard were of a trying nature. The steerage passengers in foul weather were obliged to keep below decks in the small and ill-ventilated space allotted to them, and in a typical Western Ocean Packet this space, situated in the 'tween-decks, would be at most some 70 or 80 feet long by about 30 feet broad and 6 feet high. In this confinement any number from 100 to 300 men, women and children had to pack themselves, the noisome quarters containing also the rude sleeping accommodation which the ship's carpenter used roughly to put together, in accordance with the number of passengers, on the eve of departure from port. The actual berths were of the usual shelf or bunk type, but were created with small regard for comfort. A series of partitions divided the full length of the 'tween-decks into a number of spaces, and in each space three shelves were fitted. These were about six feet wide, and

A WESTERN OCEAN PACKET, PIONEER OF THE ATLANTIC FERRY each was in turn divided into three by ledges running lengthways. Each shelf, that is to say, had to accommodate three occupants, the ledges serving to keep the latter in their proper places.

The gangway between the several rows of sleeping-berths was extremely narrow, and here were littered the belongings of the passengers, with their provisions for the voyage. The fare outwards was about £5, but the emigrant had to find himself in everything but water and the use of the steerage galley, for owing to the uncertain duration of the passage no inclusive charge could be made by the owners. It was the duty of some official of the ship to see that each emigrant had the requisite amount of provender for the voyage, and a list of these requirements vividly suggests the misery and squalor of the life on board. Yet it is difficult to find trace of any complaint made by the passengers of those days, although the modern voyager who speeds across the Atlantic in five or six days, as against the same number of weeks which were occupied in the old days of sail, is apt to be very free with his criticism.

This problem of providing food for the entire voyage in the old packets was one of great importance, for no store could be kept of anything except salt beef and pork. Tinned foods and condensed milk being unknown, the luxuries of the voyage had to be carried alive, and the result was that the ship often assumed the appearance of a floating farm. Thus the long-boat, stowed on chocks on the upper-deck, generally did duty as barn, cow-house, pigsty, hencoop, and sundry other farm buildings in one. Pigs and sheep were compelled to herd together, any display of carnivorous intentions towards the sheep on the part of the pigs having to be carefully watched for by those whose duty caused them to be on deck, or whose liveliest interest lay in the welfare of the live-stock. Cows were often carried, but goats more frequently, the latter being better able to endure a sea-passage, and giving a plentiful supply of milk on little better diet than a handful of shavings from the carpenter's bench or an old log-book.

Around the ship's farm, if so it may be termed, the daily life of the cooped-up passengers revolved. The long-boat, as the habitation of the live-stock, was the pivot of social intercourse, for not only did its occupants require continued attention, but they were a welcome source of amusement to the numerous families of the emigrants. Close by would be the galley, where culinary operations were always in progress. Firing was provided by the ship, but all cooking had to be done by the emigrants themselves, and meals of some sort were being eaten, in consequence, at every hour of the day. Pigs, poultry, and other small and fairly amenable items in the live-stock were allowed to roam about the decks, and the chronic confusion and congestion may be imagined. In the midst of the chaos some of the watch on deck would be busy with the spun-yarn winch, and other duties in connection with the working of the ship would arise at intervals, of which the execution caused confusion to be worse confounded. Life on board, in the steerage at all events, was a sort of mad, nightmare picnic, with all the discomfort and none of the fun that attends an entertainment of such kind.

It would need a Hogarth to depict at once the mingled pathos and grotesque absurdity of the scene. Social intercourse in the 'tween-decks being strictly forbidden, here was the only spot in all the ship where husband, wife and children could meet and speculate upon the doubtful future before them. That strange harlequinade contained, in poignant measure, both the comedy and the tragedy of human life, and the onlooker of any sympathy must have been hard put to it to know whether to laugh or cry.

Yet despite the difficulties of a cross-Atlantic passage in early days, the terribly insanitary quarters, and the absence of medical advice, there was little sickness, on the whole, in the sailing packets, and certainly few complaints. Experience showed, indeed, that the birth-rate amongst the passengers, during a voyage, might be expected to exceed the death-rate.

In the "cuddy," as the first-class passengers' quarters were called, things were, of course, considerably better, though possibly not quite so comfortable as the intending passenger was led to suppose upon first inquiry. On the whole, however, the passage in a good vessel under a commander selected with care by the owners would pass merrily enough —more especially since, owing to the protracted length of the voyage, the ship's company became quite a family party.

The development in general of the passenger steam-ship can hardly be better illustrated than by the story of the Atlantic passenger traffic in particular, and a practical epitome of the latter is in turn provided by the history of the Cunard Company, Ltd.

Although the Cunard Company did not actually own the first steamship which ever crossed the Atlantic, nevertheless it really inaugurated what is understood at the present time as the Atlantic passenger traffic. Its first service was begun by the small paddle-steam-ship *Britannia*, the Company in those days being known as the British and North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company—a title as long as its fleet was small.

The *Britannia*, the forerunner of the Cunard Company's great fleet of to-day, was a very small wooden ship, only 207 feet in length by 34 feet 4 inch beam, with an indicated h.p. of 432. The passenger accommodation was exceedingly limited, and the price which travellers had to pay was high. Her speed was an average of only some nine knots per hour, and it was considered a fortunate achievement if she got across in a fortnight. The discomforts of the passage were very great, the food was indifferent, and the service rather worse. Altogether it was matter or intense thankfulness on the part of the passenger when he or she was safely landed on the eastern or western shore. The passage-money to Halifax was thirty-four guineas and to Boston thirty-eight. This charge included wine, but a guinea was charged for the steward, and there were sundry other charges, which made the trip an expensive one. Now-a-days, for a third of the sum the traveller can make the voyage across the Atlantic in the *Mauretania's* second-class accommodation in half the time or less, and with infinitely more comfort—under conditions, in fact, which are luxury as compared with those which the *Britannia's* first-class passenger endured.

From the tiny dimensions of little wooden ships like the *Britannia* the liner has gradually developed through successive eras. As late as the year 1860 the Government still declined to allow the mails to be carried in iron ships, but eventually this restriction, highly obstructive to the improvement of any line, was withdrawn. Forthwith the Cunard Company, which had by now become extremely popular, began to build iron passenger-ships.

The first was the *Persia*, a vessel of nearly 4,000 tons, 350 feet in length, with a beam of 45 feet, and fitted, of course, with paddle-wheels. The last paddle-wheel steamer built for the Cunard Line was the *Scotia*, constructed in 1862. From the foundation of the line down to this date the Company had built twenty-six vessels, all with paddle-wheels (except some used in the Eastern trade), and some idea of the great size which these wheels attained may be gathered from the fact that those of the *Scotia* were forty feet in diameter. This particular vessel was famous in her day as the most magnificent and speediest Atlantic liner then known, her average time across being just under nine days.

The *China* was the first Atlantic screw-steamer built for the Cunard Company, and the *Batavia* was the first of their steamers to be fitted with compound vertical steam-engines. The first vessel of the line built of steel was the *Servia*, and with the steady march of shipbuilding progress we arrive at the steamers *Umbria*, *Etruria*, *Campania*, and *Lucania*, in which turbine engines have taken the place of the vertical reciprocating engines that in their day, when they ousted the old side-lever engine, made as great a sensation as the turbine in recent times.

The problem of the turbine engine, now brought to a high state of perfection by the method of installation known as the Parsons system, is one that has compelled very serious attention on the part of all interested in the propulsion of ships at a high rate of speed. When the little experimental vessel *Turbinia* startled the world by her record-breaking achievements, it was quickly realized that great possibilities were contained in this type of engine.

The principle of the turbine may be likened simply to the familiar water-wheel, steam instead of water impinging and expanding upon a series of blades which are mounted in cylindrical fashion and impart a direct rotatory motion to the shaft. The latter, like the shaft of the ordinary reciprocating engine, is coupled direct to the propeller, but receives a continuous drive as against the alternate and reciprocating action of the ordinary type of marine vertical engine. In addition, the multiplicity of heavy moving parts is eliminated.

A further advantage is the great amount of space saved, for although the turbine machine does actually take up somewhat more space than the vertical engine on the floor, considerable saving is effected in boiler space, and, of course, the saving in headroom is very great. Moreover, the position of the engines is kept low down, with a consequent increase of stability in the ship and a greater rigidity on the part of the machines.

Enormous as the expenditure has been on continuous experiments both with machinery for propulsion and with steam-making appliances and methods, the cost of travel on the magnificent vessels which have thus been evolved is remarkably low. The passage-money charged on a liner like the *Mauretania*, with all her luxuries, is in the first-class only about half that charged on the *Britannia* in 1840, and works out at about three-halfpence per mile—approximately the same, that is, as first-class fare on the big railways, but with this addition, that on the *Mauretania* everything is found and the fee is inclusive. The third-class fare works out at about one farthing per mile, which is astonishingly cheap.

By way of statistical contrast, let the reader compare the tiny dimensions of the *Britannia* with those of the leviathan sister-ships *Mauretania* and *Lusitania*—each of them 800 feet long, 88 feet broad, and 60 feet deep, with a tonnage of 32,500, and a h.p. of 65,000. Each ship, which is driven by turbines, has four propellers, and the latter, making about 180 revolutions per minute, give an ocean speed of 25 knots, or more than 30 miles per hour. This rate of progress is maintained even in bad weather, and it has to be a very heavy or high and confused sea indeed to compel the commander to give an order for reduction of speed. The captain's great object is to get across the Atlantic as swiftly as possible, and as a rule he achieves his purpose.

It is only by means of the considerable help given by the Government that even a wealthy and powerful steam-ship company like the Cunard has been able to put on the water the two largest, most luxurious, and fastest steam-ships that were ever built, and only after prolonged experiments and much anxious thought was it determined that the *Mauretania* and the *Lusitania* should be brought into being. The British Government agreed to advance the sum of £2,000,000 sterling towards the cost of constructing the colossal liners, and by the time they were ready for service the pair had involved a total expenditure of nearly £4,000,000. These two ships are not only amazingly swift passengerconveyers, but they are also auxiliary cruisers which could either run away from or overtake the majority of ships afloat. If Great Britain were at war with another first-class naval Power it would be the duty of the *Mauretania* and the *Lusitania*, as well as many other well-known subsidized liners, to seek out and capture or destroy the enemy's ships.

R.M.S. *MAURETANIA* (33,000 TONS) AND THE FIRST CUNARD LINER *BRITANNIA* (1,156 TONS)

They would also be of enormous service as transports, in case it became necessary to convey large bodies of troops quickly to a given point.

In their ordinary function as passenger-ships they embody everything that has been invented in recent years to ensure the safety of passengers at sea, and so amazingly careful have the builders been in their construction that it is said that if either of them were cut in two, the several halves would still remain afloat. This is on account of the great number of water-tight compartments with which they are supplied. In the number of its decks the modern liner reminds one of the "high-charged galleon" of mediæval days. The latter is described as having six and seven decks, but this is exceeded in the modern vessel, which in every exigency must be provided for and accommodation found for all that will conduce to comfort and luxury.

In addition to the most luxurious fittings in those parts of the ship which are given over to the accommodation of passengers, there are enormous kitchens, pantries, store-rooms, baggage-rooms, bunkers, and a hundred and one divisional compartments essential to the equipment of what are literally floating cities. A crew, all told, of 800 officers and men is necessary for the efficient working of one of these ocean monsters. The passengers carried on one full voyage number 2,500, so that, when full, the *Mauretania* and the *Lusitania* each have at the very least over 3,000 souls aboard. A curious feature to be noted in respect of the vast size of this ship and the actual crew carried is that out of the 800 only 70 " sailors " are carried, including the officers. 300 stewards are, however, required, and the rest are engineers, electricians, telegraph operators, telephone attendants, printers, etc., etc. When the enormous sum which the vessel herself cost is recalled, and it is reflected that she may have on board, besides so many human lives, a valuable, if small, cargo, and that she is taking, perhaps, £2,000,000 in gold and silver across the Atlantic, the vast responsibility which rests upon the captain can be fully realized.

Everything possible is done, however, to lighten the captain's burden, for not only is he supported by the most capable officers and the most efficient crews, but modern science has achieved wonders to assist him. By means of wireless telegraphy he is now able to keep in touch with land all the way across the Atlantic, and with submarine signalling apparatus it is possible for him to learn his whereabouts even when surrounded by fog, the most deadly enemy that the sailor has to fight. It was during a fog, only a few years ago, that the splendid French Atlantic liner *La Bourgogne* was run into by a sailing-ship and so badly damaged that she foundered in a few minutes with a loss of nearly 600 lives. Many a splendidly-equipped ship has started to cross the Atlantic, and from the day she left port has never been heard of. It is supposed that many of these fine vessels have collided with icebergs or with other vessels in a fog and have entirely disappeared.

So far as actual size is concerned finality has not yet been reached, for the new White Star liner *Olympic*, which was launched in October 1910, exceeds in dimensions even the giant Cunarders. She is not, however, intended to be a record-breaker, for that would have involved the expenditure of far too much money. The *Olympic* is an enormous, luxurious, and safe vessel, and with a speed of eighteen to twenty knots may be trusted to make the Atlantic passage in perfect comfort and safety.

Some particulars of this ocean monster, which is at present the largest vessel in the world, may be of interest.

She is 882 feet 6 inches long as against the *Mauretania's* 790 feet, and her breadth is 92 feet 6 inches. She is of 45,000 tons gross register, with a displacement of 60,000 tons; and is driven by a combination of high-pressure reciprocating engines and a low-pressure turbine. Like the *Mauretania* and *Lusitania*, she has four funnels, with but one mast only, and for the purpose of building this leviathan Messrs. Harland & Wolff had to put down much special plant in order to cope with such abnormal dimensions. Special building-berths had to be constructed to bear evenly the great weight imposed upon them. These berths were constructed on the reinforced concrete principle, or ferro concrete—that is, concrete in which steel rods are embedded. This new method of building construction is revolutionizing marine work in many departments; indeed, in some places barges and hulls of vessels have actually been made of ferro concrete, and thus the time may come when we shall have concrete-armoured war-vessels. The main principle of this system of construction is that steel webbing is shaped, and into this the concrete is moulded. On setting the surface is polished off, giving a marble-like appearance, which greatly reduces friction in the water, and immunity from attacks by sea-growth. Ease of repair, and difficulty of damaging the structure, are additional advantages.

The two steam-ship companies which have been named have been for many years the controlling power in connection with Atlantic liners, and it is due to their wealth and enterprise that the vessels which are now crossing the Western Ocean are unrivalled in every way. There are other lines, however, which in themselves are very powerful concerns, and have done, and are doing, a great deal to maintain the high standard of efficiency of the modern steam-ship.

To the Allan Line belongs the credit of sending across the Atlantic the first turbine ship. This is the *Virginia*, belonging to the Canadian service, to which several turbine ships are being added. Other lines crossing the Atlantic and running either to Canadian, North American, or South American ports are the American, the Anchor, the Atlantic Transport, the Canadian Pacific, the Dominion, the Hamburg-American, the Holland-America, the Norddeutscher Lloyd, the Red Star, the Royal Mail, and many other companies, some of which keep up a regular and profitable service between the West and the Mediterranean.

Just as the Cunard Line has been most prominently associated with the development of passenger-steamers going West, so the Peninsular and Oriental Company inaugurated that service to the near and far East which has now-a-days attained such enormous proportions. About 1830 the P. and O. Company sent the quaint little paddle-steamship *William Fawcett* across the Bay of Biscay to ports like Lisbon and Gibraltar. She was even smaller than the *Britannia*, being but 206 tons, 60 h.p., 74 feet by 16 feet, but she did her work thoroughly well, and was the first steamer to be added to the fleet of a famous company whose name will always be associated with the modern opening out of the near and the far East.

From the tiny dimensions of the *William Fawcett* East-going passenger-steamers grew in size until now they have developed into vessels of 12,000 tons. It must be remembered that there is a limit to the size of craft which are built specially for Eastern traffic, because these steamers almost invariably go through the Suez Canal, and owing to the comparatively shallow depth of the canal it is impossible for a vessel of more than a certain tonnage to get through that celebrated waterway. So far as Atlantic liners are concerned there is practically no limit to their size, so long as dock accommodation on a large enough scale is provided for them. In the case of the finest steam-ships of the P. and O. Company we find again that everything is done to make voyaging safe and life at sea a pleasure. This remark applies also to the other admirable passenger-ships which are engaged in journeying to and from the East. Amongst these may be named the British India Line, with its enormous fleet, the Bibby Line, and the French and German Lines, of which one of the most celebrated is the Messageries Maritimes.

The Japanese also, with that energy for which in recent years they have become remarkable, have set to work to form fleets of their own, and some very fine vessels, mostly English-built, are running between their country and the United Kingdom. In these days, naturally, the Japanese are setting to work to build their own vessels, and this work, under British guidance, they are doing very efficiently.

To Japanese, Chinese, South African, South American, and Indian ports enormous numbers of passenger-steamers are regularly trading. And in addition to these magnificent ocean-going vessels there are many special types of passenger-boats in use on lakes and rivers. On the American lakes, for example, vessels of very large size are engaged, principally in the summer-time, in passenger work. These steamers have the appearance almost of regular ocean liners, and it is necessary that they should be both well built and thoroughly equipped with all sorts of apparatus, since the lakes are vast stretches of water, and very severe and often dangerous gales are encountered.

There are also very large and fine ships, carrying considerable numbers of passengers, on some of the great American rivers—particularly the Mississippi. The big Mississippi steam-boats, on which the passenger accommodation is very extensive and quite unique, still retain that distinctive and attractive appearance which has been associated with the Father of Waters for several generations. A notable peculiarity is their amazingly shallow draught. Even when fully loaded they are able to navigate the river and get over very shallow parts, because they do not draw more than a few inches. A good many side-wheelers (*i. e.* paddle-boats) are used, but it is also common to see a stern-wheeler, the vessel in these cases being fitted with only one paddle right aft. In every case the paddles are enormous, and the steamer is provided with two great rudders, which are worked by a huge wheel on the bridge.

Such vessels, though highly interesting, hardly come within the scope of a book dealing with British ships, for they are not even built in British yards. There is one special class of passenger-ship, however, which demands a brief notice in this chapter, as having been brought into existence of recent years owing to the rapid growth of the public desire to travel. This is the cruiser-steamer, a type of vessel into which several well-known liners have been converted of late. Its sole purpose is to take passengers to different places and to provide a home for the pleasure-seekers, while the latter are absent from their own country. Thus the well-known P. and O. cruising steam-ship *Vectis* was originally their equally well-known mail-boat, the *Rome*. Not infrequently a great Cunarder, White Star liner, Royal Mail boat, or some other equally fine foreign steamer will be taken off her regular station and temporarily employed for pleasure-cruising purposes, while other lines, such as the Booth Steamship Company of Liverpool, make a special feature of pleasure tours and cruises as adjuncts to their regular services.

From *The Book of British Ships.*

THE LAST OF THE MOAS

By HENRY WARD

In the later thirties, as you may perhaps have heard tell, there was a good deal of talk about colonizing New Zealand. Up to that time nobody had turned much attention to it; a few isolated bands of adventurers had tackled the job in a half-hearted sort of way, and come to most lame and impotent conclusions. The country was left to the whalers, most of them escaped convicts, who ran things exactly as they chose; and a very bad choice they made of it. However, in the year 1839 the New Zealand Land Company was definitely formed, and chartered the *Tory*, of 400 tons and 8 guns, to take out a picked band of would-be colonists. This small but spirited venture sailed one fine day from Plymouth; and hereby hangs my tale.

Ted Whalley, my particular chum, and I had just left school. We were burning with all that seafaring ardour which comes natural to port-bred boys; and we used every inducement in our power to persuade our respective fathers to send us out in the *Tory*,—just for the fun of the thing, for I can't say that we had any settled notion as to the parts we should play upon arrival in New Zealand. Our respective and respected fathers were sternly obdurate. They considered that a shilling in the hand to us as office-boys in England was worth any unknown amount in the Bush—of the Antipodes. Consequently the *Tory* sailed without us; and—also consequently—Ted and I, finding another vessel about to follow a month later, secretly shipped ourselves thereon as cabin-boys—and so ran away to sea. I don't defend this proceeding; but that's just how things happened.

Well, by the time we had been some ninety-six days aboard the *Walberswick*, as our old tub was called, I can tell you Ted and I wished ourselves back at Plymouth. We had had enough of a cabin-boy's life, which was a dog's life in those days. And, to put it briefly, so great had been our sufferings at the hands of a brutal captain and rough crew, that we didn't feel so bad as we might have done when the big storm arose which finally destroyed the *Walberswick*. Going to the bottom was a peaceful look-out compared to what we endured daily. And though in moments of extreme danger one has hardly time to think, I remember I *did* think what a fool I had been; and—with the queer irrelevance of the mind at such moments—I indulged in a melancholy memory of my mother's hot cakes at tea-time. But this is not the story of the wreck of the *Walberswick*, which is one of the historic New Zealand wrecks. Suffice it to say that, after a terrific tussle with the storm, she struck and went to pieces immediately—with all hands, as it was supposed.

Two, however, escaped—Ted Whalley and myself. Whether by sheer luck, or miracle, or a blend of both, we were washed ashore; bruised, battered, bleeding, and only half-alive, but still that half was worth having. And before we could revive sufficiently to collect our scattered wits, we were in the hands of dusky captors. For the Maoris of that part, who had been watching with interest the desperate unavailing struggles of the *Walberswick* as she drove upon a lee shore, came down from their *pah* (or fortified village) to scout for wreckage-booty; and, finding it in human shape, annexed it without more ado.

Well, we were scared, I can assure you! for we had heard tales by the dozen of these same Maoris—how they were naturally cruel and vindictive, and rendered still more so by the whalers' behaviour to them; how human flesh was a staple commodity, bartered from one tribe to another, and how captives of war were fattened and eaten, with great gusto, by these disgusting cannibals. We looked at their frightful faces, not hideous so much by nature as by intricate tattooing; we saw their spears and tomahawks, their stone and wooden clubs, and our hearts sank deeper than the *Walberswick*. Better we had been drowned, than live to furnish feasting for the Maoris.

However, they treated us very decently on the whole. They took us up to the *pah*, and into one of their *whares* or wattle-huts, which was clean and neat, and where every article whatsoever was covered with curious decorative patterns, as if it also had been tattooed. They fed us with fish, and with some queer vegetable stuff, which we afterwards discovered to be fern-roots, bruised and roasted. In spite of our soaking we had boys' appetites, and we supped heartily; they pressed us to eat more, and we did eat more—lots; then the Maori women, in their mats and blankets, laughed gutturally and exclaimed, "Kapai!" ("first-rate!") and were obviously delighted. This rather upset our digestions, for Ted and I simultaneously whispered, "Are they wanting to fatten us up?" and we determined *not* to be fattened up, no matter what pangs it cost us.

We were taken in charge by a man who was, beyond a doubt, the chief. The albatross feathers in his head-dress were bigger than anybody else's. His cloak was bordered with strips of rat-skin, an adornment which no other native there could boast; and he had an air of authority and a bigger *whare* than the rest. Many of the Maori women are very good-looking; certainly his wife was, and she was kind after her fashion. She gave us petticoats of New Zealand flax to wear, while she dried our sopping clothes, and cloaks of some coarser material. And we stayed there a good many days—I suppose a fortnight or so, but we had no means of reckoning—and steadily starved ourselves. Our gaolers—I can't call them anything else, for they never let us out of their sight—endeavoured to tempt our failing appetites. They brought us yams and sweet potatoes, which some folks in the *pah*

cultivated in little plantations fenced about with reeds. They tried all varieties of fish upon us. They even proffered their greatest delicacy, wild-pig—oh, didn't it smell good? But we declined all these temptations; and although we surreptitiously gobbled things when the Maoris' backs were turned, we had the satisfaction of seeing each other grow thinner day by day.

One day there was great excitement in the *pah*, everybody talking at once, and pointing hither and thither, and sometimes gesticulating towards us where we stood in the hut doorway. We heard the word "pakeha" very often, which means soldier. And presently the chief came and took us away from the *whare*, with a stern, forbidding brow. We knew a few Maori words by now, and would have made shift to converse with him; but he wouldn't speak. "Is he going to kill us now?" we asked each other with our eyes. But no, he marched straight on, holding an arm of each of us, right away up the mountain-side on which the village was built. A river ran at the foot of the mountain, which sloped sharply from it in steep buttresses; these were covered, from the water's edge to the mountain-top, with the most profuse and wonderful greenery—trees, ferns, palms, pines, creepers of vivid orange and crimson, and the tall white plumes of the *toi-toi* grass or New Zealand flax. A narrow shelf or ledge of rock was cut out in the face of the mountain, which followed, more or less accurately, the windings of the river below; along this path the chief led us. And suddenly he stopped at the mouth of a cave, overhung with festoons of foliage, and made us enter. He gave us to understand by signs that we must stay there—that if we tried to escape we should be lost in the illimitable Bush; and while he spoke (so to call it), two more Maoris silently approached and deposited two bundles and a vessel of water upon the floor of the cave. It all happened so quickly that we had hardly time to realize it. The chief turned on his heel and was gone with his companions; and Ted and I were alone—very much alone.

We explored the cave; it was about eight feet high, roomy, and fairly dry; then we explored the bundles, which contained—one, sleeping mats and a couple of rough blanket cloaks; the other, dried fish, and cooked yams and fern-roots. Then we looked upon the green trellis of forest all around us, above and below and on either side. It was extremely beautiful; we couldn't help noticing that. The exquisite green of boughs and fronds, the crimson glory of the *rata* parasite, climbing to the tallest pine-tops, and the myriad flowers among the undergrowth—fine, I tell you! And countless noises proceeded from this leafy mass—the horrid scream of the kea-parrot, which is like a cat's mew gone mad; the musical note of the bell-birds, the grunting of the wild-pig, and the splashing of cascades a thousand feet below, where the river leaped among the rocks.

There are no fierce beasts or poisonous reptiles in New Zealand; but we didn't know that. So, at every strange noise, we were rather jumpy and nervous. But we still had our clasp-knives about us, the last relic of England; our gaolers had left us those. And by and by we went out of the cave and cut ourselves big sticks, such as we had seen the Maoris carry, one pointed at the end, and one as heavy and club-like as we could make it. And then we knew how hungry we were. The question of fattening-up was apparently in abeyance for the present. Indeed, perhaps this was the last square meal we should get, if we were to be left abandoned here. So Ted and I had a regular feed that night, the best we had had for I don't know when; and perhaps that is why we slept so badly. Anyhow, some time about the middle of the night I had a fearful nightmare. I thought a gigantic shadow stood before me, black against the moonlight in the cave's mouth. It was like a colossal native with superhumanly long legs, wrapped loosely in a blanket; it was still more like a bird, only a bird isn't twelve or fourteen feet high. And while I vainly tried to shout, as you do in dreams, it turned and stalked away. Then I started up, fully awake and said, "Ted! Ted!"

"Is it gone?" came a groan in answer.

"Is *what* gone?" I cried.

"The shadow—the big shadow!" he gasped.

"It was a dream, wasn't it?" I said.

"I don't know," said Ted, "but anyhow, I'm beastly frightened."

And we sat there for hours, sticks in hands, hearts bumping wildly, trying to make up our minds whether we had dreamed the thing or not. Nothing further happened. At daybreak we gave up the riddle and went to sleep.

It was rather slow, sticking about in the cave all next day; we ventured to "prospect" a little, and climb one or two trees, and we chivied various queer little wingless birds that scuttled in the undergrowth—ki-wis, I think they were called; we had seen their feathers on the Maoris' costumes. About sunset the two natives returned with more food and water. We had known them fairly well in the *pah;* and we questioned them as best we might, by signs mostly, about the shadow—was it man, or bird? The Maoris behaved extremely oddly. They shuffled about and looked at each other, and muttered a lot of gibberish about the Patu-paeareke. I am aware now—though then I was not—that the Patu-paeareke were the giant fairies who were supposed to have inhabited the mountain-tops before the Maoris came. They were majestic, mysterious, gigantic beings, and still dwelt solitarily in secluded *pahs*. They were mostly invisible; but you might sometimes catch a glimpse of one at early morning; it was white, and clad in white. At any rate, with the Patu-paeareke, as with fairies of all nations, it wasn't safe to talk about them. The Maoris dismissed the subject and themselves before we could question them further.

That night we should have enjoyed a good healthy sleep, but I suppose my nerves were a bit off colour with all that we had lately been through. For the least noise seemed to wake me, even the rustling of the leaves; until I got into a regular restless fidgety state, only slumbering by fitful snatches. Suddenly I heard a footstep—unmistakably a footstep; it echoed down the cave, at whose inner end we lay. And there was the monster shadow again. It stood against the moonlight as before, turning slowly to and fro. I touched Ted Whalley on the shoulder, whispering, "Ssh! look!" He sat up, staring drowsily, then—

"By Jingo!" he exclaimed, "it's got a beak!"

I clapped my hand over his mouth; but the Thing had gone. We both felt pretty bad after that for a while; and next day we weren't so keen about exploring in the Bush. We were shaken, that's the truth of it; yet at the same time we were devoured by curiosity.

It was quite a relief when our Maori commissariat department arrived again with the usual stores. This time we were determined to get some information out of them. And Ted drew a picture of the creature with his pointed stick on the soil of the cave floor; drew it

"WE SWARMED UP A TREE . . . AND CLUNG TO ITS BRANCHES SOME FIFTY FEET IN AIR" with a beak, too, which I confess I had not seen. The natives, in somewhat muffled tones, as though afraid of being heard, cried, "Moa! Moa!" And, pointing to a ki-wi, that just then crossed the path,—one of the queer, long-beaked little chaps which I told you inhabited the Bush—one of the men measured with his hand about a foot from the ground, and said, "Ki-wi!" Then he raised his club as high as he could over his head, saying, "Moa!" It was quite plain what he wanted to indicate. The moa was a gigantic bird.

When our friends—for such they now seemed—had departed, Ted and I discussed the subject with vigour. It seemed that he knew more about moas than I did. They were monster wingless birds, like ki-wis swollen to elephantine size, that inhabited New Zealand long since—no doubt they were a sort of pet bantam chicks kept by the Patu-paeareke—but were supposed to be extinct three hundred years at least. Nobody had seen a live one for goodness knows when; but their bones were found in heaps. Ted said that Captain Cook brought home moa feathers on the heads of some of the clubs which the Maoris gave him. And it was supposed that the earlier Maori settlers fed on moas till the birds became extinct; then the Maoris fed on one another.

Ted reeled off several yarns about moas, which I should have had no hesitation in laughing to scorn, were it not for the vision of the last two nights.

"Are they dangerous? Would they attack us?" I inquired.

Ted said he didn't know, but he wouldn't care to try.

"It would be a fine thing," I argued, "if we could go moa-hunting."

Ted, it seemed, had his doubts as to whether the moa would be hunter or prey. However, we agreed that next time the creature appeared—it evidently was a bird of regular habits, and went down to the river, or on some other expedition, about the same time every night—we could at least follow in its track. We then made a hearty supper and sat down to wait; we didn't want the bird to take us unawares as before.

Midnight—the moon rising later and hanging low in the valley. Shuffle, shuffle, among the leaves—a curious tread, such as you can suppose a giant claw would make—there stood the moa in the cave-mouth. Owing to the different position of the moon, we saw it quite clearly this time—it *was* a bird—but what a bird! I have since learned that there were formerly fifteen species of moa in New Zealand, of which the *Dinornis Elephanticus* was the biggest. So this, I take it, was the *Dinornis Elephanticus*—for it stood some thirteen feet high, and its legs were thicker than a man's thigh, and its beak gave one the shivers to look at. It stopped there for at least a minute, turning its head slowly hither and thither, as though meditating whether it wouldn't like to turn into the cave for a nap; then it majestically stalked away, as on the previous occasions. We were not cowards, but, if we had not been ashamed to show funk before each other's faces, well, I for one would have let that moa get a good start before trying to track it. However, we shouldered our clubs and crept out barefoot.

Well, we followed that moa—at a fairly respectful distance—up and down, through thick and thin most literally, for the best part of the night. We lurked after it while it drank at the river, we pried upon it while it grazed among the tree-ferns, we got quite stiff waiting while it meditated at great length, which it did every now and then. We were just growing accustomed to its dimensions, and feeling prepared at any moment to encounter it, when it took some silly notion into its head that it was being watched, and came charging down upon us full speed. We swarmed up a tree which under any other circumstances would have been quite unscaleable, and clung to its branches some fifty feet in air, while the moa glowered beneath us.

"Thank Heaven," I said to Ted, "the beastly thing can't fly."

"All the same," he replied, hoarse with exertion, "it can stay down below till we drop off like flies."

It didn't, though. After making a few vicious pecks at the tree-trunk, as high as it could reach, the moa strutted off again; and, emboldened by success, we followed. This time it was all up-hill work. We climbed the sheer face of the mountain, hanging on by branches, pulling ourselves up by creepers, and found ourselves at last on the narrow rocky ledge which I have mentioned, with the moa steadily striding before us. It never once looked back—I can't think what would have happened if it had! After what seemed miles of going, the mountain shelved away into swampy ground, the pathway died out, the Bush grew scanty, and by the dim light of dawn we saw the moa descend the bare slope to the edge of the swamp, and dive—as it seemed—into the very earth.

There was its home; and now we must return to ours. By simply keeping along the narrow shelf-way we got back to our cave in the end. We were completely played out with the night's adventure. We just turned ourselves over and went to sleep without one word; and slept till the next noonday. But when we had breakfasted at dinner-time, our spirits began to revive.

"I vote we go and call on Mister Moa," says Ted Whalley. "Come on—who's afraid?" and he arrogantly poised a club.

"There are no trees round Moa Villa, Ted, my boy," I told him; "do you propose to race him back to the Bush?"

"I'll chance it," says Ted; "anyway, I'm going to have a shot for a moa egg. There may be dozens in his den. My! what a splash it would make if we ever got a moa back to England!"

Then we reflected, rather gloomily, that our own prospects of getting back to England were remote, to say the least of it; and, to inspire more cheerful thoughts, we started off for the swamp.

We had no difficulty in tracing the moa's huge footprints to its lair; but nothing except sheer curiosity would have made me look in. A large chamber was scooped out in the earth—I think a family could have lived there—and two enormous eggs reposed there, side by side. No sign of any moa, male or female. It was simply the chance of a lifetime.

"Shall we take both eggs?" I asked Ted. We spoke beneath our breath, as though the absent moa might hear us.

"Only one, I think," said he. "One of us must have his hands free." He entered as he spoke, and picked up an egg—it was all he could do to carry it in both arms.

In less than no time we were on the ledge again, Ted first, walking very carefully with his precious burden, and I behind, keeping my eyes open all round. We were just within a few feet of the cave—we knew it by certain trees we had blazed—and filled with a triumph such as we had never before experienced, when—— We met the moa face to face!

It was quite as much taken aback as we were; more so, I think, for it stood stock-still a minute. How we dived past the creature I don't know to this day; of course its legs took up less room than its body. But we did get past—and into the cave; it seemed our only goal, handicapped as we were by the egg. Ted put down the egg upon his sleeping-mat, and seized his club. I had the pointed stick. Much good they were, these two sticks, against a moa twelve feet high and robbed of its egg! In a much shorter time than it takes to tell, the moa was after us. We threw the water vessels at it—of course they only hit its legs and maddened it. We tried to strike at its breast as the thing came striding into the cave, and missed it every time. It came monstrously after us, round and round the cave, with furious beak and trampling claws, and our one hope lay in the fact that the cave was far too low for it, so that it had to stoop and crouch continuously, and kept hitting its head against the roof. If we should escape into the open, it was certain death for one or both of us—the bird would have him before he could climb a tree. We were dizzily dodging it round the cave, hanging on to its legs and getting thrown off, beating at it unavailingly with our sticks, which might just as well have been lucifer matches—and we were getting pumped out. We guessed that it was all up, and that we hadn't a ghost of a chance; but still we desperately struck and dodged, being English boys, who never know when they are beaten, when—— What was that sound of voices without? Our Maori food-bringers? They were, if anything, more afraid of moas than we. No; impossible as it seemed, we heard English voices—good rough accents of Yorkshire and Somerset—calling and coming nearer every moment. White men's faces peered into the cave.

"Shoot! shoot high!" Ted yelled, and "Shoot! shoot quick!" I echoed. Our rescuers didn't wait to question; they banged at once as they were told. The moa gave a sort of croak and staggered back, just as it was delivering a frightful dig at Ted.

We scrambled out, and gasped, "Shoot again!" The foremost men were reloading, and others behind them pushed past and fired, though they could hardly see what they aimed at, by reason of the bright light without, which intensified the darkness of the cave, now filled with powdery smoke. But coincidently with the second shots came a terrible thunderous roar—a trembling of the solid earth beneath our feet. The forest rocked, the mountain shuddered—every one clutched wildly at the nearest branches, for foothold there seemed none. The cave crashed in, with a rumble and thud of falling stones, and we all went down the rocky mountain face in a cataract of earth and vegetation. The whole side of the mountain slid to the river—and then pulled up abruptly. If you are to have your choice of death between a moa and an earthquake, all I can say is, the moa comes most natural.

However, I must wind up my tale. The men who had arrived so opportunely were some of the colonists of the *Tory*. Hearing a rumour of white boys captive among the natives, they had by a judicious bribe secured the secret of our hiding-place. Whether the Maoris intended to hold us to ransom, or to feast upon us, I have never been able to find out. At any rate, they parted from us quite amicably; and our new-found friends, after some few weeks, shipped us off in a homeward-bound vessel. We begged hard to stay; but they told us that just at present they had not much use for boys. And before we sailed, we spent a good five days among the *débris* of the mountain-side; and at last, by round-about ways, we re-entered the swamp, which had suffered little. We found the lair with comparative ease; but the remaining egg was cracked all to bits; not an atom of use to us. All we could find to reward our diligence were some bones of ancestral moas scattered here and there (these birds always seem to have died in several places at once, so that a complete set of bones is hardly ever found in the same place). With these trophies we returned to England; they are now in the Natural History Museum. And though I have heard a good many tall tales since then, usually from the lips of golfers or whaling skippers, I have never come across any other man who could boast that he had fought with the Last of the Moas.

JACK HARDY'S ESCAPE

By HERBERT STRANG

Mr. Midshipman Hardy was a very zealous officer, and since his duties brought him into contact with the smugglers of Luscombe, it was not surprising that he had made enemies. Nor was he himself much surprised when one day he was ambushed by a dozen of the fellows, carried blindfold to a boat, and shipped over to France for safe custody. But it was decidedly annoying to find himself shut up in an old chateau near Étaples, with a number of prisoners of war captured in the course of the long struggle with Napoleon.

The prisoners were kept on the top floor of the chateau, several rooms having been knocked into one. The windows were barred ; there were two stories beneath ; outside, the walled park all round the house was regularly patrolled by sentries ; and there was a guard constantly at the gate. The wall bordering the grounds was about nine feet high and spiked at the top. These facts were at once noted by Jack, for the instant he was shut up he began to think of escape ; but the outlook was not promising.

If he wished to escape at the first, his longing was intensified after a very few days of prison. There were about seventy prisoners altogether, and twenty jailers. The treatment was not far short of brutal. The prisoners had to sleep on coarse pallets of straw, the stalks cut so short that they were like beds of spikes. The food consisted of nothing but brown bread and more or less dirty water. One and a half sous a day were allowed by the government to each prisoner for the purchase of extra food—a miserably insufficient sum ; yet, poor as it was, it more often found its way into the pockets of the jailers than into those of the prisoners. The rooms were never properly cleaned, and the jailers thought nothing of bullying and assaulting any man who dared to grumble.

Jack had the good luck to be spared some of the worst hardships. He was allowed the use of a small room off the larger one—a kind of antechamber, the partition of which was only half demolished where the separate rooms had been knocked into one for the reception of the prisoners. A door opened directly on the staircase; it was kept closed, and it had a grating through which the sentry on duty could watch what was going on.

The warders, drafted from two companies of infantry in the neighbouring town, were relieved daily. This was a precaution taken, no doubt, to prevent them from getting tired of their job and relaxing in their watchfulness. At all hours of the night the steady tramp of the sentries round the house could be heard by wakeful prisoners above. And many were wakeful, for their poor fare was ill calculated to encourage sleep, and as the days passed they shivered with the cold. It did not occur to the officer in command, a rough-tongued captain who had apparently risen from the ranks, to provide a fire; and when one of the prisoners ventured to ask for one, he got a snubbing.

Jack was the only officer among the captives. He learnt afterwards that officers were often liberated on parole; but this was entirely in the discretion of the district commandant, and Jack was unlucky in coming into the hands of a bully. He tried to keep cheerful, but it was hard in such depressing surroundings. The only pleasant part of the day was the short interval allowed for exercise in the park. A space was roped off within which the prisoners might run or walk; it was a considerable distance from the wall, and sentries with loaded muskets stood on guard. There was thus no chance of making a dash for liberty; but the opportunity of stretching their legs in the open for twenty minutes was a boon to men accustomed to the freedom of life on the sea.

Thus four months passed. Every day was like another. At times a little news came to the prisoners through the jailers—how further attempts to destroy the flotilla of praams at Boulogne had been defeated; how the English had attacked in vain Fort Rouge at Calais harbour; how Napoleon had been at last crowned emperor by the

Pope in the church of Notre Dame. But the news which Jack eagerly awaited, of a great victory won by Admiral Nelson at sea, never came.

One day in February, when snow was falling, a new batch of prisoners was brought in, to the disgust of the others, for the room was already overcrowded. But Jack was glad and sorry at once to see that the new arrivals were no other than Babbage, Turley, and a dozen more from the *Fury*, his old vessel.

"Well, I never did see!" ejaculated the boatswain, when Jack hailed him. "Bless my eyes, sir, but I thought you was gone to glory—leastways to Davy Jones, and so did we all. How did you come to this dirty old hulk of a French prison, sir?"

Jack told the whole story.

"What happened to you and the boat?" he asked.

"Why, sir, we waited for you three hours or more, as we was bid, and when you didn't come back, I said we ought to go up along and find you.

So go we did; but though we spent a couple of hours a-prowling round, never a word did we hear of you. So we had to give it up, and we went back and reported you missing to Mr. Blake. He put in at Luscombe himself, and raised a deal of dust, sir, but 'twas no good. So he reported you to the Admiral at Portsmouth as missing, and we got another officer in your place."

"And how did you become prisoners, too?"

"Why, sir, a French sloop set on us t'other day when we was running before a stiff gale. The poor little *Fury's* topmast was carried away and the mainmast sprung. The sloop hugged us till the wind dropped; then she came up alongside and boarded. She had three times our number, and they must have bred different Frenchmen in the days when one Englishman was equal to three; we did our best, as you may believe; she lost half her men, but the other half was still double what was left of us, so we had to haul down our colours. Mr. Blake and the new midshipman have been marched off, I did hear, to a place called Verdun; here's the rest of us, what was left, and if you'll look out of the window, you'll see the poor little *Fury* lying off the quay there. I s'pose they'll patch her up and call her by a new name, and that's enough to make any Englishman's blood boil, it is."

Jack was as angry as Babbage at the success of the sloop in capturing the cutter. But he felt somewhat cheered at the sight of the faces of his messmates; and their presence, strangely enough, set him again thinking of escape. Babbage was a seasoned and knowing old salt, and Jack resolved to have a long and private talk with him at the first opportunity.

But though in the course of a week they had many such talks—in the park while exercising—in the little antechamber at dead of night—they almost despaired of hitting upon any likely plan of regaining their liberty. There was no chance of silencing the sentries at the head of the staircase; any attempt to break open the door would at once be heard outside, and the whole force of warders, all soldiers, would be on the alert. The bars across the windows might, indeed, be loosened or forcibly wrenched out, and the bedclothes—if the material of which they were made was not too poor—might be torn up and knotted to form a rope; but a small light was kept burning in the room all night, and any work at the windows would certainly be seen by the sentries at the door, and by the men patrolling outside.

"Ah now! if only brother Sol was here!" sighed Babbage one evening, when Jack and he had been talking over every plan that suggested itself, possible and impossible.

"What could he do?" asked Jack.

"'Twas a saying of his, sir, 'Never a way in but a way out,' though I said to him, 'What about a mouse trap?' Ah, brother Sol would see a way out of this trap if any man could."

"Well, I wish this brother Sol of yours would get himself captured and come here. Where is he?"

"I don't know, sir; I haven't seen him for four-and-twenty year. But well I mind the last thing he said to me before he went away. 'Ben,' says he, 'God bless you!' I never forgot them feeling words, sir."

"I suppose not. As he isn't here we must do without him. We *must* get out somehow, Babbage. I for one am not going to rot in France for half-a-dozen years. Is there anything we haven't thought of?"

Babbage pursed his lips and pondered.

"We've thought of everything from window to ground," he said presently. "The only thing we haven't thought of is the roof, and we want to go down, not up—leastways, not yet."

"I don't know. What about the chimney?"

"No good, sir. Haven't I seen the sergeant of the guard poke his nose up every day to see if the bars are safe? They're just fixed so that no natural man's head could pass between. Must have been done on purpose."

"Does the sergeant examine them carefully?"

"No, sir; he just stoops down and twists his head round, and gives a squint up."

"Well, I'll come into your room to-night, and have a look at them. Luckily the chimney is on the same side as the door; the sentry won't see me. We might be able to loosen those bars and clear the chimney."

" And what then, sir ? "

" I'd climb the roof and take a look round. I can't say more at present."

"Very good, sir."

In the small hours Jack crept quietly into the larger room and got into the chimney unobserved. The bars were just above his head, and he very soon decided that with a sufficiently hard implement he could loosen the mortar about their ends. That was the doubtful matter. The knives supplied to a few of the prisoners, who were given meat for their dinner, were removed by the jailers after the meal, and all weapons had of course been taken from the men before they were brought into the room. But next morning Jack managed to force a long rusty nail out of one of the planks of the floor of his room ; it seemed to him stout and strong enough for his purpose.

It was necessary to take the rest of the prisoners into his confidence. He got Babbage to tell them what he had in view, and as they were all Englishmen, with just as keen a longing for liberty as himself, there was no fear of their betraying him. As soon as the jailers had distributed the morning rations he slipped into the chimney. Half-a-dozen of the men, gathered as if casually near the fire-place, screened him from any one who might suddenly enter the room. He began to scrape away the mortar from one end of each of the bars, working as quickly as he could. Turley swept up with his hand the flakes of mortar that fell to the floor.

By the evening Jack had worked so well that one bar was loosened sufficiently to be bent down when the time came. Then he got some of the men to tear off scraps of their woollen shirts, and with these he filled up the holes, so that, even if the bar was tested by the sergeant, there was a good chance that it should hold well enough to prevent discovery.

The scraping occupied him for two more days—one bar a day. By the time he had finished he found that the nail which had served him so well was worn to within half-an-inch of the head.

He determined to make an expedition up the chimney on that third evening, if circumstances proved favourable. After the evening meal of bread and water, he got Ben to use his strength in bending down the bars. Then he crawled through and began to ascend. It was a tight fit. The chimney was narrow; but Jack, never stout, had grown thin on the prison fare, and he wormed his way up by the aid of projecting bricks left for the chimney-sweep; those were the days of chimney-climbing. The flue was not very dirty; evidently no fires had been lighted below for a long time.

He reached the top without mishap. There was no chimney-pot. Looking cautiously out, showing as little of his head as possible, he saw the sea rippling far below in the distance, shining ruddy in the glow of the setting sun. A strong easterly breeze was blowing. To the right lay the harbour and town. To the left were two sloops and three or four praams; alongside the nearest sloop a coasting brig; then two fishing smacks. A cable's length from these lay the *Fury*, now apparently refitted with new main and topmasts, and eastward of her, a little farther out, a lugger and another smack.

Jack guessed that, besides the *Fury*, only the sloops and the praams were likely to be armed with cannon, though the lugger might carry a small gun. The immediate surroundings of the chateau were out of sight, except to his left, being screened by the parapet of the flat roof some feet away from the chimney. Except at one point, where the roof of an outbuilding rose nearly to the same elevation as the part where he was perched, there was a sheer drop of fifteen feet from the top of the chimney-stack.

It was a sloping roof, and Jack made up his mind to crawl down it until he came to a chimney of the outbuilding, from which a thin spiral of smoke was rising. But he waited until the dusk had deepened before he thought it safe to emerge. Then he crept carefully down till he reached the smoking chimney. The roof there was not quite as high as the other; the drop was about five feet; and he guessed from the position that below the chimney were the servants' quarters. Two other chimneys beyond were smoking: these, he thought, must belong to the rooms occupied by the guard. The other chimneys, from which no smoke was rising, could only be reached by dropping some twelve feet and climbing an equal distance; and to do that would involve the risk of being seen or heard.

Jack placed his hand on the side of the chimney from which a thin smoke was coming. There was so little heat in the bricks that he guessed the fire below had been allowed to die down. His guess was confirmed when he put his hand in the air over the mouth of the chimney: it was scarcely warm. He resolved to climb down and find out whither the chimney led. Thin as it was, the smoke in the narrow space was rather suffocating, and he felt a certain dread lest he should cough and betray his presence. There seemed no end to the chimney, as step by step he let himself down, moving with extreme caution to avoid making any sound that could be heard below.

As he approached the bottom he was relieved to find that the heat did not perceptibly increase. The fire must be almost dead. He was dislodging soot from the walls; would it be seen by the persons in the room? Perhaps if they saw it they would think it due to the strong wind. Perhaps there was nobody in the room. He heard no voices, no sound of movement, though he saw there was a light. The chimney was a good deal wider at the point he had reached, and he wondered if it led to the kitchen.

Waiting a little to make sure that the room was unoccupied, he at length ventured to slip down to the grate and peep into the room. It was empty of people. A large table stood in the middle; kitchen utensils hung from pegs on the walls; the door was ajar, and he now heard voices, proceeding evidently from an adjoining room.

On the hearth was a long iron poker. "That may prove useful," he thought; and leaping lightly down, he seized it. A large chopper hung to a nail at the side of the chimney. This also he secured. Then creeping to the door, he peeped round from the level of the floor. Three men were seated at a table enjoying their supper. This was apparently the cook's room. The men were very much at their ease. A large fire of logs threw a glow upon their faces; a bottle of wine had been emptied; the smell of fried onions teased Jack's appetite. He listened to the men's conversation.

"The captain will bring two guests to supper," said one.

" Bother ! " growled a second, the fattest of all, by whom, as Jack now saw, a cook's white cap lay, " he will keep us up late. The captain is so particular. A supper fit for Bonaparte is not good enough for him. The kitchen fire will have to be made up. Go and see to it, Jules."

The man addressed scraped his plate and drank his wine before lazily rising to do the cook's bidding. Jack flew back with the speed of a hare, and before the man had pushed back his chair the adventurer was several feet up the chimney, grasping his precious spoil, the poker and the chopper.

" Well, now ! " thought Jack with a chuckle as he scrambled out of the chimney, " won't there be a rumpus when the cook misses his poker ! Luckily, he'll never think it has gone aloft ! "

It was a very sooty object that descended, after pausing to make sure that all was safe, into the prisoners' room. Jack was immediately surrounded by a group of the *Fury's* men, so eager to hear what had happened that they raised their voices and provoked an angry reprimand from the sentry at the door.

" Silence, you donkeys ! " whispered Jack.

After this the men behaved more discreetly, and left Jack alone with Babbage.

" Now, Babbage," said Jack, when he had finished his story, " we're going to escape, and I'll tell you how."

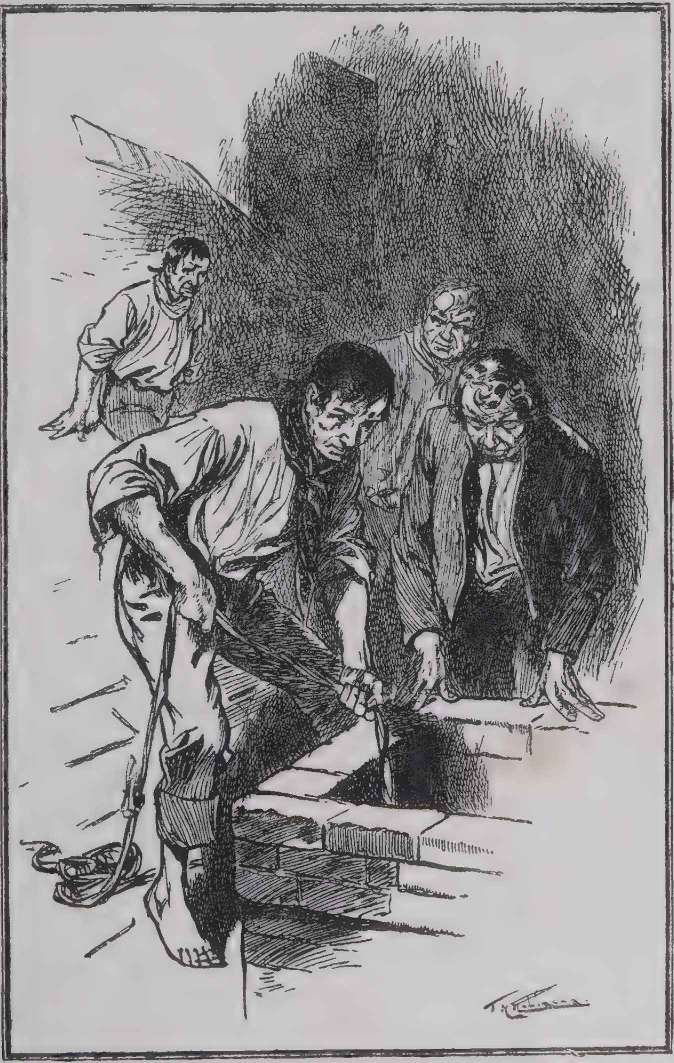
" Not up the chimney, sir ? I'd squeeze myself as small as I could, but I'm afeard I should stick fast and spoil the whole boiling."

" No ; you're too fat for the chimney. You'll be left in charge till you hear a hubbub below ; then you're to break open the door and make a dash for it at the head of the men."

" Why, I'll obey orders, sir ; Ben Babbage always obeys orders ; but, begging your pardon, it beats me how I'm to break the door open with a poker and a chopper——"

" Babbage, if you make any more difficulties you'll never see your brother Sol, for here you'll stay. You shall have other tools by and by. You understand, nothing is to be done until you hear the signal ;

it will be loud enough, I promise you. I shall wait until the captain's guests have gone. That will probably be late; so there'll be plenty of time for us to make a rope. No, don't speak; I haven't done yet. We'll tear up the coverlets—they're precious thin,—but we haven't any better—and twist up a rope long enough to reach from the top of the chimney to the bottom: about fifty feet, I should think. Then I'll take it with me, and four or five of the men, Turley for one——"



"Begging your pardon, sir——"

"What?"

"Begging your pardon, sir,—not Turley, but me."

"Oh, very well! You're too fat for the chimney at present, as you owned yourself, but we could get something off you with the chopper."

Babbage grinned sheepishly, and made no further suggestions.

Several hours later, Jack, at the window, heard loud voices and laughter in the courtyard below. The captain's guests were evidently departing. Allowing an hour to pass, sufficient, he thought, for the captain and the servants to have settled into their beauty sleep, he signed to his four selected men, and led the way up the chimney, Turley carrying the rope. They clambered across the roof and came to the kitchen chimney.

"Now, Turley," said Jack, "pay out the rope as I go down. By George! 'tis a good deal hotter than when I was here before."

He got down into the chimney, leaving the four men on the roof. It was indeed very hot; the kitchen fire, made up for cooking the supper, had evidently not yet died down. Fortunately there was little smoke; even without it the air was so stifling that Jack was surprised that he reached the bottom safely. He jumped when his feet touched the grate; they were protected only by his stockings.

There was no light in the room, but the glow of the dying fire was strong enough to show him that it was empty. He tiptoed to the three doors. The back door was locked and bolted; the door of the cook's room was closed, but not locked, and he heard snores from within; the third door, leading to the rest of the house, he supposed, was ajar, and a dim light came through the opening.

A little more light was necessary. Not without a tremor, Jack ventured to put on the embers one or two small chips of wood that were drying at the side of the grate. They kindled, and lit the room with a dancing flame, which Jack fervently hoped would not attract the attention of the sentry outside. He had already seen that the shutters of the window were closed; he trusted there was no chink to betray him.

The first thing was to get arms of some kind for his men. A poker and a chopper he had already purloined, much to the mystification of the cook, no doubt. Ah! there was a rolling-pin hanging by a loop from a nail in the wall. Down it came; in a trice he tied it to the thin rope. Giving this a gentle tug, he saw the rolling-pin disappear up the chimney.

Then he looked round quickly for more weapons. Yes: there was a cleaver, a grid-iron, a frying-pan. "I must have them," he said to himself. By the time he had taken them down from their nails, the rope was hanging once more within reach. One by one they followed the rolling-pin. Another hunt on tiptoe round the room yielded a brass candlestick, a braising-pan, several dish-covers, which he rejected as being too clumsy to wield, a big soup-ladle, and a couple of long carving knives. There were saucepans in plenty, but too big for his purpose. He had to be content with the ten articles he had obtained—rude weapons indeed, but likely to be formidable in the hands of determined and desperate men. As the utensils of metal passed up the chimney they clicked more than once on the wall, and Jack's heart beat faster as he wondered if the sounds would be heard. But no doubt there were mice and rats behind these old walls; blessed rats and mice!

After waiting a little to make sure that the cook and his assistants had not been disturbed, he prepared to go farther afield. Creeping to the door that stood ajar, he pushed it a little. It moved with a creak which must surely, Jack thought, be heard all over the house. He waited breathlessly; there was no sound. But he could not risk a continuous creaking. Taking his courage in both hands he pushed the door quickly, stopping it with a jerk. It made never a sound. Jack saw by the light of a small lamp that it opened into a narrow passage, with a door at the end. He crept along the wall. The further door was not closed. He peeped in. "The dining-room!" he thought. There was the table at which the captain had entertained his guests.

To the left there was another passage at right angles to the first. A narrow staircase led, he supposed, to the servants' rooms. A few steps along the passage brought him to the entrance hall, from which sprang the main staircase. He looked up. He was at the bottom of a deep well, extending, it appeared, to the top of the mansion. He shrank back into the shade of the huge post at the foot of the stairs; for if the sentries outside the prisoners' room chanced to hear a movement below and looked over, they would certainly see him.

Then he cast back, and came to the rear staircase. The steps were of stone: he might ascend without the danger of creaking; and he must see whither these stairs led. He went up the steps in pitch darkness, and found himself on a landing. Groping along the wall, he knew that he was in a stone-flagged corridor. Ah! at the end there was a streak of light. Tiptoeing along, he came to a door partly open. Dared he peep round it? He paused for a few seconds—

"Bother!" he said to himself, "I wish my heart wouldn't thump so!" He listened: how these Frenchmen snored! Were they all asleep? He took a step forward; then felt a sudden unreasoning fear, and stole back for several yards. In a few seconds he had collected himself and returned to the door.

Now he ventured to put his head into the room. A dozen men—he would have said a score at the first moment were asleep on rough settles against the wall. They had their clothes on, as if in bivouac, ready for action at a moment's notice. A smoky lamp hung from a bracket on the wall. In the corner of the fire-place, where there was a faint glow, were stacked the men's muskets. The key of the room was on the inside.

Having taken all this in at a glance, Jack carefully withdrew, returned along the passage and down the stairs, and arrived once more at the kitchen. Two sharp tugs at the rope brought Turley to his side; at short intervals the other three appeared.

"All safe!" whispered Jack. "You've taken the things to Babbage, Turley?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"That's well. Now, Turley, that's the cook's room. You'll stay and watch the door. If any one tries to break out, you'll know what to do. You other men, come with me."

He led them quietly along the passage and up the staircase. At the landing he halted.

"The guards are in that room at the end of the corridor," he whispered. "I'm going in to try and get their muskets. If I'm discovered, you three make a rush and get hold of the muskets. Never mind about me. You understand?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

He crept stealthily into the room. The men's cartridge-belts lay in a heap on the table. Taking care to make no noise, Jack lifted two or three, one at a time, and handed them to his men. Then he approached the pile of arms. With the gentlest of movements he released two of the muskets, one with each hand, on opposite sides of the pile. Would the balance be disturbed? No, all was safe. He passed the weapons out of the room, and turned to remove a third and a fourth. But who had made that click? It was one of the men outside. Jack looked anxiously at the sleeping forms. Had any of them been awakened?

One of the Frenchmen turned, sat up, rubbed his eyes—and saw the English prisoner!

"Thieves! Robbers! Wake up! The prisoners!"

He was so sleepy that he scarcely knew what he was saying; but his shout roused his companions. As they turned, too heavy with sleep to have all their wits about them, Jack's three men sprang in, and in a twinkling seized the remaining muskets and rushed back into the passage. The first Frenchman was now on his feet. Jack with a straight right-hander sent him spinning over; then he dashed to the door, slipped the key out of one side of the lock and into the other, and, just as two of the other men were lurching towards him, skipped outside, slammed the door, and turned the key.

"Now, men, after me!" he cried.

Jack raced along the corridor, conscious of a tremendous uproar in the guard-room—cries, oaths, violent thumps and kicks on the door. Up the stairs! There were the sentries at the top, startled out of their wits. What was happening? Hubbub below, hubbub in the prisoners' room! The prisoners were actually battering at the door! And with heavy implements: where had they got them? Crash! There was a panel half driven out. The amazed soldiers raised their muskets; they could at least fire into the room. But at this moment they caught sight of Jack and the sailors springing up the back staircase. Another crash on the door! They waited for no more, but with a yell turned their backs and leapt down the main staircase, taking three stairs at a time.

"Ahoy there, Babbage; stand clear!" shouted Jack.

"Ay, ay, sir!" cried the boatswain from within.

Putting to the lock the musket he carried, Jack fired. The lock was burst; with a touch the door gave way; and a second later the prisoners began to pour out.

"Steady, men!" cried Jack. "No crowding, or we'll get jammed and clapped under hatches again. Armed men in front!"

They followed Jack down the staircase by which he had come. As they passed the locked door of the guard-room they heard the imprisoned men making a furious assault upon it. But it was a piece of good oak; they had no firearms to blow away the lock; and Jack knew that they might hammer it for an hour without making much impression.

Down they go! Here they are at the kitchen. And there is Turley, a saucepan in one hand, a huge dish-cover in the other, holding at bay the fat cook and his two assistants, who are vainly attempting, with ferocious cries, to get within his guard. When they see Jack enter the room and behind him a swarm of seamen, they wheel round and scurry like hares into the further apartment, the fat cook going last, squealing.

"No danger there!" said Jack. "There's no time to lose, men. Now for the back door."

He ran to it, drew back the bolts, and, throwing it wide, dashed out into the open. There was a blinding flash close by; the shot missed; and with Turley and others hard on his heels Jack ran straight in the direction from which the shot had come. But the sentry who had fired was already scampering away. A companion had joined him; together they made for the wicket of the front gate, dashed through, and tried to close it. But Turley was just in time to slip his saucepan in and hold the gate open. The sentries waited no longer. They raced as fast as their legs would carry them towards the town.

To overtake them was impossible. In a few minutes the two companies of infantry would be on the track of the escaped prisoners. Was there time to reach the harbour before they came up? Had the shots already roused the officers of the vessels at anchor and caused them to dispatch men ashore? Jack could not wait even to wonder. On he went, calling to his men to close up, straight along the road leading to the town. But to pass through the streets to the harbour would be fatal. Within half-a-mile of the town he halted.

"You, Mudge, and you, Folkard, run off a quarter of a mile to port, and fire your muskets. Then follow as hard as you can in our wake. Quick, men!"

He hoped that the firing in that direction would mislead the enemy, and give the fugitives the few minutes' grace they needed for the next move of his plan. When the two men had gone off to the left, he led the party rapidly to the right, hoping to strike the harbour at its eastern extremity.

As the fugitives, keeping perfect silence, stumbled in the darkness over fields and across ditches towards the harbour, they heard loud shouts to their left, followed by the roll of a drum. Clearly the alarm had been raised, the soldiers were turning out. All now depended on whether the direction of the escape was discovered within the next few minutes. If not, Jack thought that he might reach the harbour with his band in time to seize some boats before being intercepted. He listened eagerly for shots behind; they seemed long in coming, and the outskirts of the village loomed up in the darkness ahead before the expected reports at last struck his ear. Fervently he hoped that the sound would draw the soldiers off in that direction.

He wished he could go faster, but many of the men were weak from the effects of imprisonment and meagre fare, and he had to accommodate his pace to the slowest.

Making a fairly wide circuit, Jack steered for the extremity of the harbour, where only a few fishermen's cottages intervened between him and the waterside. Some fishers, who had turned out of their dwellings on hearing the alarm, scurried down the rutty road with loud shouts. The noise was bound to bring the soldiers to the spot within a few minutes. Jack's heart was pumping at a great rate, but he did not lose his coolness or his nerve. He must do something to check the soldiers, that was plain. Sending twenty men to search the shore for boats, he posted the nine armed with muskets under cover of the cottages, with orders to delay the soldiers at all costs. The rest of his men, some armed with the spoil of the kitchen, others with bricks and stones snatched up on the way, he placed behind the nine to support them.

A minute or two—horribly long they seemed to Jack—of anxious waiting; then the two men who had fired the shots in the rear came panting up, and from the direction of the harbour a messenger brought the good news that six large boats had been found. Almost at the same moment the clump-clump of heavy boots and sabots on the road was distinctly heard, ever growing louder. If the runners proved to be soldiers it would be impossible to escape without a fight. Jack would rather have been allowed to embark in peace, but if there must be a fight——

"Well," he whispered to Babbage, "we'll show them what English Jack Tars are made of."

He at once sent the unarmed men down to the water under guidance of the messenger, bidding them get into the boats; then with the rest he prepared to fight a rear-guard action.

The Frenchmen came on helter-skelter. Not one of them imagined that they had any enemy more formidable than unarmed

"Jack, with a straight right-hander, sent him spinning over."

weaklings to deal with. Jack waited until they were within twenty yards; even in the dim starlight they could be seen distinctly enough. Then in a voice that rang clearly he gave the word "Fire!" The eleven rifles flashed; there were cries from the advancing Frenchmen; some of them at any rate must have been hit at this point-blank range. The head of the column was in confusion; men turned this way and that; they were apparently without leaders.

While they halted and wavered, another word of command was heard above their cries and the sound of shuffling feet: "Charge!" The sailors responded with a cheer; some thirty strong, they dashed forward as one man; and in a few seconds the enemy were in full flight, struck by one of those sudden panics to which even the best troops are liable in night operations.

Jack also had his moment of alarm. Knowing the thoughtless impetuosity of the British sailor, he feared lest, with the enemy on the run, his men should forget everything else in the excitement of pursuit. But he had them soon in hand again.

"Now to the boats!" he said, "and as quickly as you can."

He had no difficulty in finding them. One of the sloops had already opened fire upon them; and the sound of oars in that direction showed that a boat, perhaps more than one, had been lowered, no doubt to pull in to the assistance of the soldiers. It was too dark for the fire of the sloop to be effective; Jack heard one or two shots strike the harbour wall.

Here were the boats, a few yards from the beach.

"Tumble in, men," said Jack.

In a few seconds all were aboard. Already Jack in the foremost boat was steering for a black shape almost exactly ahead, which he believed to be the *Fury*. Scarcely was his craft well under way before he heard oars in that direction; the cutter also, it appeared, was sending a boat.

"So much the better!" thought Jack. "There'll be fewer men on deck to repel boarders."

In less than a minute he saw the cutter's boat ahead; it was turning, as if to regain the vessel—he wondered why.

"Give way, men!" he cried, and from the boat behind came Babbage's voice urging his crew.

It was a race between them. The other boats were some distance astern, for two, being without oars, were being towed by the remaining two. In the two foremost boats the men were straining every nerve. They knew that their lives depended on success, and scarcely needed the encouraging words of Jack and the old boatswain. They gained on the Frenchmen; the three boats dashed almost together under the cutter's counter; then there was a tussle. Rising in the boats, the crews shouted and cheered and belaboured their opponents. Jack's men plying rolling-pins, grid-irons, soup-ladles, frying-pans, shovels, candlesticks, with a hearty vigour that made them more formidable weapons than the Frenchmen's cutlasses. In half-a-minute the Frenchmen, outnumbered and outfought, were hurled neck and crop out of their boats, and the English sailors were swarming up the side of the cutter.

In the short fight the cutter's crew had been unable to help their comrades; it was such a rough-and-tumble that they would as likely have hit a friend as a foe. But they gathered for a desperate resistance when the Englishmen poured on to the deck. Jack and his party boarded aft, Babbage's men forward; but neither made easy progress, for the Frenchmen fought like tigers, rallying twice after momentary set-backs, and taking advantage of their superior numbers to press forward in the attempt to drive the boarders into the sea. The fight was at its fiercest when the arrival of the other boats turned the scale. Cheering British tars beset the gallant Frenchmen on all sides; man after man of the defenders fell; and in two minutes from the time when the last boat's crew boarded, the cutter was once more in English hands.

"Secure the Frenchmen!" shouted Jack, when the enemy surrendered and cried for quarter. He himself rushed aft and cut the cable; and while Turley and some others were collecting the Frenchmen's weapons and escorting their prisoners below, a score of willing hands had run up the mainsail, jib, and foresail. Grazing the side of the fishing smack to leeward as she gathered way, the *Fury* moved out to sea. As she emerged from the shelter of the brig a round shot from one of the sloops struck her full amidships, and the other sloop was seen making sail in pursuit.

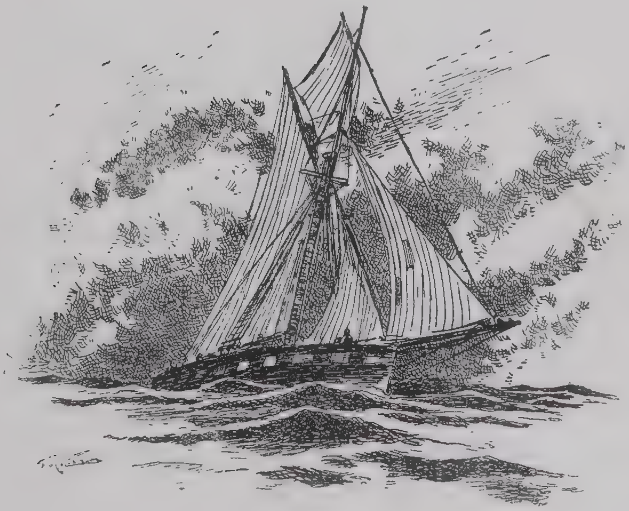
" Any damage done ? " sang out Jack.

" Not a farthing's worth, sir," replied Turley. " 'Twas well above water-line."

" Here's another ! Look out ! " shouted Babbage.

But the second shot whizzed harmlessly by ; then the sloops and the other vessels faded from sight ; and the buoyant little cutter began to curtsey to the waves of the Channel, showing white-crested in the gloom.

From *Jack Hardy.*



A KING'S ADVENTURE

By Dr. MACAULAY

Charles XII, King of Sweden, was said by his historian to be "the most extraordinary man, perhaps, that ever appeared in the world." He must indeed have been a wonderful man, even among monarchs, for such a remark to be made by an author and a philosopher like Voltaire, who wrote his life. We do not generally consider Alexander the Great to have been mad, except on some occasions, when his brain was overturned by drinking. Yet his name is coupled by the poet with that of Charles XII in the famous line—

> "From Macedonia's madman to the Swede."

That there was always a touch of insanity in the Swedish king, drunk or sober, no one can well doubt. Yet he had qualities which endeared him to his people,—courage, generosity, and love of justice,—while his marvellous exploits in war have made his name stand high among the heroes of history.

Born at Stockholm June 17th, 1682, he came to the throne in 1701. From his early boyhood he had strangely ambitious ideas. Alexander the Great was his hero, and he resolved to imitate him as his model. When he was about to be crowned in the cathedral of Upsala, as was the custom with the kings of Sweden, he seized the crown from the hands of the archbishop and placed it on his own head, as was done by Napoleon in after times. Since the grand days of Gustavus Adolphus, Sweden had held a place in Europe higher than seemed warranted by its population or territory. Denmark, Poland, and Russia, counting on the youth of the new king, formed a league against Sweden. He attacked them each in succession. First he compelled Denmark to sue for peace after a campaign which lasted only six weeks. The Russians, with an immense army, numbering at least 100,000, were attacked by Charles with a force of not above 9,000 Swedes, at Nerva, in Courland. He defeated them with the loss of nearly 30,000 men, many of whom perished in the sea, while 20,000 prisoners were taken, the whole loss of Charles being about 1,200 men. In the following spring the Swedish king marched against Poland, whose king, Augustus, he dethroned, and compelled the Poles to elect, in 1705, Stanislaus Leczinski. He ought to have here set bounds to his ambitious career, and made terms with the Czar, Peter the Great. But he continued the war against Russia, with some success, until fortune failed him on the fatal field of Pultowa. There, on July 8th, 1709, he was vanquished, his army nearly annihilated, and he with difficulty escaped, to find a refuge in Turkey. He was received by the sultan with high consideration, and was allowed a pension sufficient to live in princely state at Bender, where he remained for several years.

It was here that the following extraordinary events occurred, which are highly characteristic of Charles, and if in some respects amusing, they also give plain proof of the insanity which marked many of the incidents of his adventurous and strangely chequered life.

After his defeat at Pultowa, as we have seen, Charles fled for protection into Turkey, where he remained upwards of three years, living in considerable splendour at the expense of the then sultan. At last, through intrigue, and probably also tired of supporting his extravagant guest, the Turkish sovereign was induced to order Charles to quit his dominions, who, notwithstanding he had received a considerable sum of money to pay the expenses of his journey, actually refused to depart. The sultan, in a passion, convoked an extraordinary divan, and, what very seldom happens, spoke himself on the occasion. His speech, according to the translation then made of it, was as follows: " I hardly ever knew the king of Sweden but by his defeat at Pultowa, and by his desiring me to grant him an asylum in my dominions; I have not, I believe, any need of him, nor any reason either to love or fear him; yet notwithstanding, without consulting any other motives than the hospitality of a Mussulman, and my own generosity, which sheds the dew of its favours upon the great as well as the small, upon strangers as well as my own subjects, I have received and assisted him, his ministers, officers, and soldiers, and have not ceased for these three years and a half to load him with presents. I have granted him a considerable guard to conduct him into his own kingdom. He asked a thousand purses to defray some expenses, though I pay them all; in the room of which I granted him twelve hundred. After having got these out of the hands of the seraskier of Bender, he asks a thousand purses more, and refuses to depart, under a pretence that the guard is too small, whereas, it is but too large to pass through the country of a friend. I ask, then, whether it would be violating the laws of hospitality to send back this prince; and whether foreign powers ought to accuse me of violence and injustice, in case I should be obliged to compel him to depart?"

All the divan answered, that by so doing, the grand seignior would act but with justice. The mufti declared that hospitality from Mussulmen towards infidels was not required, and much less towards the ungrateful; and he gave his fetsa, a kind of mandate which generally accompanies the important orders of the grand seignior; these fetsas are revered as oracles, though the very persons by whom they are given are as much slaves to the sultan as any others.

The order and the fetsa were carried to Bender by the bouryouk Imraour, grand master of the horse, and a chiaou bashaw, first usher. The bashaw of Bender received the order at the house of the cham of Tartary, from whence he immediately repaired to Varnitza, to ask the king whether he would depart as a friend, or reduce him to the necessity of executing the sultan's orders.

Charles, thus menaced, was not master of his passion. "Obey your master, if you dare," says he to the bashaw, "and leave my presence immediately." The bashaw, fired with indignation, returned at full gallop, contrary to the usual custom of the Turks; and chancing to meet Fabricius in his way, he called out to him as he passed, saying, "The king will not hear reason; you will see strange things presently." The same day he discontinued the supply of the king's provisions, and removed his guard of janissaries. He caused intimation to be given to all the Poles and Cossacks, at Varnitza, that, if they had a mind to have any provisions, they must quit the camp of the king of Sweden, and repair to Bender, and put themselves under the protection of the

Porte. They all obeyed, and left the king without any other attendants than the officers of his household, and 300 Swedish soldiers, to make head against 20,000 Tartars and 6,000 Turks.

There was now no provision in the camp either for the men or their horses. The king ordered twenty of the fine Arabian horses, which had been sent him by the grand seignior, to be shot without the camp, saying, " I will have none of their provisions, nor their horses." This was an excellent regale to the Tartars, who, as is well known, think horse-flesh delicious food. In the meantime the Turks and the Tartars invested the king's little camp on every side.

The king, without the least discomposure, made a regular entrenchment with his three hundred Swedes, in which work he himself assisted ; his chancellor, his treasurer, his secretary, his valets-de-chambre, and all domestics giving likewise their assistance. Some barricadoed the windows, and others fastened beams behind the doors, in the form of buttresses.

As soon as the house was sufficiently barricadoed, and the king had rode round his pretended fortification, he sat down to chess with his favourite Grothusen, with as much tranquillity as if everything was in the greatest security. Happily M. Fabricius, the envoy of Holstein, did not lodge at Varnitza, but at a small village between Varnitza and Bender, where Mr. Jeffereys, the English envoy to the king of Sweden, likewise resided. These two ministers, seeing the storm ready to burst, took on themselves the office of mediators between the Turks and the king. The cham, and especially the bashaw of Bender, who had no mind to offer violence to the Swedish monarch, received with eagerness the offers of these two ministers. They had two conferences at Bender, in which they were assisted by the usher of the seraglio, and the grand master of the horse, who had brought the sultan's order and the mufti's fetsa.

M. Fabricius[1] declared to them that his Swedish majesty had many cogent reasons to believe that they meant to deliver him up to his enemies in Poland. The cham, the bashaw, and all the rest swore by their heads, and called God to witness, that they detested an action so horribly perfidious; and that they would shed the last drop of their blood rather than suffer the least disrespect to be shown to the king in Poland; adding, that they had in their hands the Russian and Polish ambassadors, who would answer with their lives for the least affront that should be offered to the king of Sweden. In fine, they complained bitterly that the king should conceive such injurious suspicions against people who had received him so politely, and treated him with so much humanity. Though oaths are frequently the language of perfidy, Fabricius could not help being persuaded: he thought he could discern in their protestations that air of truth which falsehood can, at best, but imitate imperfectly. He knew perfectly well there had been a secret correspondence between the cham of Tartary and King Augustus; but he was at last persuaded that the only end of their negotiation was to oblige Charles XII to quit the dominions of the grand seignior. Whether Fabricius deceived himself or not, he assured them he would represent to the king the injustice of his suspicions. "But," adds he,

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[1] The whole of this account is related by M. Fabricius in his letters.

"do you intend to compel him to depart ?" "Yes," says the bashaw, "such is the order of our master." He then entreated them to consider seriously whether that order implied that they should shed the blood of a crowned head. "Yes," replies the cham, in a passion, "if that crowned head disobeys the grand seignior in his dominions."

In the mean time, everything being ready for the assault, the death of Charles XII seemed inevitable; but the order of the sultan not expressly saying whether they were to kill him in case of resistance, the bashaw prevailed on the cham to let him dispatch an express to Adrianople, where the grand seignior then resided, to receive the last orders of His Highness.

Mr. Jeffereys and M. Fabricius, having procured this short respite, hastened to acquaint the king with it; they arrived with all the eagerness of people who bring good news, but were received very coldly; he called them unsolicited mediators, and still persisted in the belief that the order of the sultan and the fetsa of the mufti were both forged, inasmuch as they had sent to the Porte for fresh orders.

The English minister retired, firmly resolved to interfere no more in the affairs of so inflexible a prince. M. Fabricius, beloved by the king, and more accustomed to his humour than the English minister, remained with him, to conjure him not to hazard so precious a life on such an unnecessary occasion.

The king for answer showed him his fortifications, and begged he would employ his mediation only to procure him some provisions. The Turks were easily prevailed upon to allow provisions to be conveyed to the king's camp, until the return of the courier from Adrianople. The cham himself had strictly enjoined his Tartars, who were eager for pillage, not to make any attempt against the Swedes, till the arrival of fresh orders; so that Charles went sometimes out of his camp with forty horse, and rode through the midst of the Tartars, who with great respect left him a free passage: he would even march directly up to their lines, which, instead of resisting, would immediately open to him.

At last the order of the grand seignior being come, to put to the sword all the Swedes who should make the least resistance, and not even to spare the life of the king, the bashaw had the complaisance to show the order to M. Fabricius, to the end that he might make his last effort to turn the obstinacy of Charles. Fabricius went immediately to acquaint him with these sad tidings. "Have you seen the order you speak of?" said the king. "Yes," replied Fabricius. "Well, then, go tell them, in my name, that this second order is another forgery, and that I will not depart." Fabricius threw himself at his feet, fell into a passion, and reproached him with his obstinacy; but all to no purpose. "Return to your Turk," said the king to him, smiling; "if they attack me, I shall know how to defend myself."

The king's chaplains likewise threw themselves on their knees before him, conjuring him not to expose to certain death the unhappy remains of Pultowa, and especially his own sacred person; assuring him that resistance in such a case was altogether unjustifiable; and that it was a direct violation of the laws of hospitality, to resolve to continue with strangers against their will; especially with those strangers who had so long and so generously supported him. The king, though he had not been angry with Fabricius, fell into a passion with his priests, and told them that he had taken them to pray for him, and not to give him advice.

The Generals Hord and Dardoff, whose sentiments had always been against hazarding a battle which could not fail of proving unsuccessful, showed the king their breasts covered with wounds, which they had received in his service, and assured him that they were ready to lay down their lives for him; but begged that it might be, at least, upon a more necessary occasion. "I know by your wounds, and my own," says Charles to them, "that we have fought valiantly together. You have done your duty hitherto; do it to-day likewise." Nothing now remained but to obey. Every one was ashamed not to court death with their king. This prince, being now prepared for the assault, flattered himself in secret that he should have the honour of sustaining, with three hundred Swedes, the efforts of a whole army. He assigned to every man his post: his Chancellor Mullern and the Secretary Empreus and his clerks were to defend the chancery house; Baron Feif, at the head of the officers of the kitchen, was stationed in another post; the grooms of the stable and the cooks had another place to guard; for with him every one was a soldier. He then rode from the entrenchments to his house, promising rewards to every one, creating officers, and assuring them that he would make captains of the very meanest of his servants who should fight with courage.

It was not long before they beheld the army of the Turks and Tartars advancing to attack this little entrenchment with ten pieces of cannon and two mortars. The horses' tails waved in the air; the clarions sounded; the cries of "Alla, Alla!" were heard on every side. Baron Grothusen remarked, that the Turks did not mix in their cries any injurious reflections against the king, but that they only called him "Demirbash" (head of iron). He therefore instantly resolved to go out of the camp alone, and unarmed; and accordingly advanced to the lines of the janissaries, most of whom had received money from him: "What, my friends," says he to them, in their own language, "are you come to massacre three hundred Swedes, who are defenceless? You brave janissaries, who have pardoned a hundred thousand Russians, upon their crying 'Amman' (pardon), have you forgot the many favours you have received from us? and would you assassinate this great king of Sweden, whom you love, and whose liberality you have so often experienced? My friends, he desires but three days, and the orders of the sultan are not so strict as you are taught to believe."

These words produced an effect which Grothusen himself could not have expected. The janissaries swore by their beards that they would not attack the king, but would give him the three days he demanded. In vain the signal for assault was given; the janissaries, so far from obeying, threatened to fall upon their leaders, if they would not grant the three days to the king of Sweden: they then went to the bashaw of Bender's tent, crying out that the sultan's orders were fictitious; to which unexpected sedition the bashaw had nothing to oppose but patience.

He affected a satisfaction at the generous resolution of the janissaries, and ordered them to return to Bender. The cham of Tartary, being an impetuous man, would have given the assault immediately, with his own troops; but the bashaw, who was not willing that the

Tartars should have all the honour of taking the king, while he himself, perhaps, might be punished for the disobedience of the janissaries, persuaded the cham to wait till the next day.

The bashaw, on his return to Bender, assembled all the officers of the janissaries, and the oldest soldiers, to whom he read, and also showed them, the positive order of the sultan, together with the mufti's fetsa. Sixty of the oldest, with venerable grey beards, who had received a thousand presents from the hands of the king of Sweden, proposed to go to him in person, to entreat him to put himself into their hands, and to permit them to serve him as guards.

The bashaw agreed to it; as indeed there was no expedient he would not have taken, rather than have been reduced to the necessity of killing this prince. These sixty old veterans accordingly repaired the next morning to Varnitza, having nothing in their hands but long white rods, the only arms of the janissaries when they are not at war; for the Turks regard the Christian custom of carrying swords in time of peace, and of entering armed into churches, and the houses of their friends, as truly barbarous.

They addressed themselves to Baron Grothusen and Chancellor Mullern; they told them that they came to serve as faithful guards to the king; and that if he pleased they would conduct him to Adrianople, where he might personally speak with the grand seignior. At the time they were making this proposal, the king was reading the letters which were brought from Constantinople, and which Fabricius, who could no longer attend him in person, had sent him secretly by a janissary. They were from Count Poniatowsky, who could neither serve him at Bender nor Adrianople, being detained at Constantinople, by order of the Porte, from the time of his making the imprudent demand of a thousand purses. He therein told the king, that the orders of the sultan to seize or massacre his royal person, in case of resistance, were but too true; that indeed the sultan was deceived by his ministers; but that the more he was imposed upon, he would, for that very reason, be the more faithfully obeyed; that he must submit to the time, and yield to necessity; that he took the liberty to advise him to try every expedient with the ministers by way of negotiations; not to be inflexible in a matter which required the gentlest management; and to expect from time and good policy a remedy for that evil, which, by violent measures, would be only rendered incurable.

But neither the proposals of the old janissaries, nor the letters of Poniatowsky, could give the king even an idea that he could yield without incurring dishonour. He chose rather to perish by the hands of the Turks, than to be, in any respect, their prisoner; he therefore dismissed the janissaries, without deigning to see them, and sent them word, that if they did not immediately depart, he would shave their beards for them; which, in the Eastern countries, is esteemed the most outrageous affront.

The old men, filled with the most lively indignation, returned home, crying out as they went, "Ah, this head of iron! since he will perish, let him perish." They went and gave the bashaw an account of their commission, and informed their comrades at Bender of the strange reception they had met with. They then swore to obey the bashaw's orders without delay, and were as impatient to begin the assault, as they had been backward the day before.

The word of command was immediately given; the Turks marched up to the fortifications; the Tartars were already waiting for them, and the cannon began to play. The janissaries on the one side, and the Tartars on the other, in an instant forced the little camp; hardly had twenty Swedes time to draw their swords, before the whole three hundred were surrounded and made prisoners, without resistance. The king was then on horseback, between his house and his camp, with the Generals Hord, Dardoff, and Sparre; and seeing that all his soldiers were taken prisoners before his eyes, he said, with great composure, to these three officers, "Come, let us go and defend the house; we will fight," adds he with a smile, "*pro aris et focis*."

Accordingly he galloped with them up to the house, in which he had placed about forty domestics as sentinels, and which he had fortified in the best manner he was able.

The generals, accustomed as they were to the dauntless intrepidity of their master, were surprised to see him resolve in cold blood, and even with an air of pleasantry, to defend himself against ten pieces of

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cannon and a whole army; nevertheless they followed him, with some guards and domestics, which made in all about twenty persons.

When they came to the door, they found it beset by the janissaries; besides which, two hundred Turks and Tartars had already entered by a window, and had made themselves masters of all the apartments, except a large hall, into which the king's domestics had retired. This hall was happily near the door at which the king designed to enter with his little troop of twenty persons; he threw himself off his horse with pistol and sword in hand, and his followers did the same.

The janissaries fell upon him on all sides: they were animated with the promise which the bashaw had made, of eight ducats of gold to every one who should only touch his clothes, in case they could take him. He wounded and killed, however, every one who approached his person. A janissary, whom he had wounded, clapped his blunderbuss to his face, and had he not been jostled by the arm of a Turk, owing to the crowd, which moved backwards and forwards like waves, the king had certainly been killed, as the ball grazed upon his nose, and carried with it a part of his ear, and then broke the arm of General Hord, who was destined to be wounded by the side of his master.

The king plunged his sword in the janissary's breast; at the same time his domestics, who were shut up in the great hall, opened the door: the king entered like an arrow, followed by his little troop; they instantly shut the door, and barricadoed it with whatever they could find. In this manner was Charles XII shut up in a hall, with all his attendants, consisting of about sixty men, officers, guards, secretaries, valets-de-chambre, and domestics of every kind.

The janissaries and Tartars pillaged the rest of the house, and filled the apartments. "Come," says the king, "let us go and drive out these barbarians:" and putting himself at the head of his men, he with his own hands opened the door of the hall that led to his bed-chamber, rushed into the room, and fired upon those who were plundering.

The Turks, loaded with spoil, and terrified at the sudden appearance of the king, whom they had been accustomed to respect, threw down their arms, leaped out of the window, or retired to the cellars; the king, taking advantage of their confusion, and his own men being animated with success, they pursued the Turks from chamber to chamber, killing or wounding those who had not made their escape; and, in a quarter of an hour, cleared the house of their enemies.

In the heat of the fight the king perceived two janissaries who had hid themselves under his bed; one of them he killed with his sword, the other asked pardon, by crying "Amman." "I give thee thy life," said the king to him, "on condition that you go and give to the bashaw a faithful account of what you have seen." The Turk readily promised to do this, and was allowed to leap out at the window like the rest.

The Swedes being, at last, masters of the house, again shut and barricadoed the windows. They were not in want of arms, a ground room full of firearms and powder having escaped the tumultuary search of the janissaries. These they employed to good service; they fired through the windows almost close upon the Turks, of whom, in less than half a quarter of an hour, they killed two hundred.

The cannon still played upon the house; yet, as the stones were very soft, they only made some holes, but demolished nothing.

A KING'S ADVENTURE

The cham of Tartary, and the bashaw, who were desirous of taking the king alive, and being ashamed to lose so many men, and to employ a whole army against sixty persons, thought it advisable to set fire to the house, in order to oblige the king to surrender. They caused some arrows, twisted about with lighted matches, to be shot upon the roof, and against the doors and windows, and the house was in flames in a moment. The roof, all on fire, was ready to tumble upon the Swedes. The king, with great calmness, gave orders to extinguish the fire; finding a little barrel of liquor, he took it up himself, and, assisted by two Swedes, threw it upon the place where the fire was most violent. At last he recollected that the barrel was full of brandy; but the hurry inseparable from such a scene of confusion hindered him from thinking of it in time. The fire now raged with double fury; the king's apartment was entirely consumed; the great hall, where the Swedes were, was filled with a terrible smoke, mixed with sheets of flame, which entered in at the doors of the neighbouring apartments; one half of the roof had sunk within the house, and the other had fallen on the outside, crackling amidst the flames.

The Turks, who all the while surrounded the house, saw with admiration, mixed with terror, the Swedes continue in the house all in flames; but their astonishment was still greater when they saw the door open, and the king and his followers rushing out upon them like so many madmen. Charles and his principal officers were armed with swords and pistols; every man fired two pistols at once, as soon as the doors were opened; and, in the twinkling of an eye, throwing away their pistols and drawing their swords, they made the Turks recoil above fifty paces: but in a moment after, this little troop was surrounded; the king, who was booted, according to his usual custom, entangled himself with his spurs, and fell; one-and-twenty janissaries at once sprang upon him; he immediately threw his sword into the air, to save himself the mortification of surrendering it; and the Turks carried him to the bashaw's quarters, some taking hold of his legs, and others of his arms, in the same manner as sick persons are carried, to prevent their being hurt.

The moment the king found himself taken prisoner, the violence

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of his temper, and the fury which such a long and desperate fight must have naturally inspired, gave place at once to a mild and gentle behaviour. He dropped not a word of impatience, nor was an angry look to be seen in his face. He regarded the janissaries with a smiling countenance; and they carried him off, crying "Alla!" with an indignation mixed at the same time with respect. His officers were taken at the same time, and stripped by the Turks and Tartars. It was on the 12th February, 1713, that this strange event happened.

Soon afterwards Charles returned to Sweden. He had lost not only the fruit of all his early conquests, but found himself deprived of a large part of his hereditary dominions. He had learned nothing from adversity. Meditating new conquests and adventures, he began by raising an army to attack Norway. It was in this conflict that his strange career was suddenly closed. At the siege of the small fortress of Frederikshall he was struck by a bullet, said to have been shot by one of his own soldiers. The accidental shot proved fatal on November 30th, 1718. Every one knows the use made of the incident in the famous lines in Dr. Johnson's poem on the "Vanity of Human Wishes." The whole passage, of which some of the lines have become classical and popular, is worthy of being here quoted.

> "On what foundation stands the warrior's pride,
> How just his hopes, let Swedish Charles decide.
> A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
> No dangers fright him, and no labours tire;
> O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,
> Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain;
> No joys to him pacific sceptres yield,
> War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field.
> Behold, surrounding kings their powers combine,
> And one capitulate, and one resign;
> Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain,
> 'Think nothing gain'd,' he cries, 'till naught remain,
> On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,
> And all be mine beneath the polar sky.'
> The march begins in military state,
> And nations on his eye suspended wait;
> Stern famine guards the solitary coast,
> And winter barricades the realms of frost;
> He comes, nor want, nor cold his course delay;—
> Hide, blushing glory, hide Pultowa's day!
> The vanquish'd hero leaves his broken bands,
> And shows his miseries in distant lands;
> Condemn'd, a needy suppliant, to wait,
> While ladies interpose, and slaves debate.
> But did not Chance at length her error mend?
> Did no subverted empire mark his end?
> Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound,
> Or hostile millions press him to the ground?
> His fall was destined to a barren strand,
> A petty fortress, and a dubious hand;
> He left a name, at which the world grew pale
> To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

THE 'BETSY JANE'

By SYDNEY DOBELL

"How many?" said our good captain.
"Twenty sail and more."
We were homeward bound,
Scudding in a gale with our jib towards the Nore.
Right athwart our tack
The foe came thick and black,
Like storm-birds and foul weather—you might count them by the score.

The *Betsy Jane* did slack
To see the game in view;

They knew the Union Jack,
And the tyrant's flag we knew!
Our captain shouted, "Clear the decks!" and the bosun's whistle blew.

Then our gallant captain,
With his hand he seized the wheel,
And pointed with his stump to the middle of the foe.
"Hurrah, lads, in we go!"
(You should hear the British cheer,
Fore and aft.)

"There are twenty sail," sang he,
"But little *Betsy Jane* bobs to nothing on the sea!"
(You should hear the British cheer,
Fore and aft.)

"See yon ugly craft
With the pennon at her main!
Hurrah, my merry boys,
There goes the *Betsy Jane!*"
(You should hear the British cheer,
Fore and aft.)

The foe, he beats to quarters, and the Russian bugles sound,
And the little *Betsy Jane*, she leaps upon the sea.
"Port and starboard!" cried our captain;
"Pay it in, my hearts!" sang he;
"We're old England's sons,
And we'll fight for her to-day!"
(You should hear the British cheer,
Fore and aft.)
"Fire away!"
In she runs,
And her guns
Thunder round.

HOW TO KEEP FIT

By GILBERT L. JESSOP

Although the Napoleonic observation that we are "a nation of shopkeepers" still holds good, it might in very truth be transposed into "a nation of sportsmen." From the merchant motoring in lordly state to his favourite golf-course down to the office-boy disporting himself on the rough-hewn pitches of a public park, each and all snatch what moments they can for the enjoyment of their particular recreation. And even if, as some alarmists would have us believe, we are rather apt to go to extremes in placing sport before work, we have at any rate something to show for it. The great facilities we now possess for the pursuit of sport have had their natural effect in the improved general fitness of the English race. Despite the clamours which arise when our oarsmen are defeated by their foreign rivals, or our cricketers and footballers are overcome, such happenings are in themselves no signs of any physical deterioration. It is merely in the natural order of things, and such defeats are for us a blessing in disguise. The carelessness which is bound to set in with a succession of endless victories receives a rude shock, and, as a consequence, we begin to set our house in order, and, with past experience to aid us, improvement is the general result.

With those pre-eminent in sport of all descriptions, success or failure depends mainly on the condition of physical fitness in which the individual at the time finds himself. If for sport in general one takes cricket in particular, one feels, perhaps, a little more at home with the subject. Unlike such arduous pursuits as rowing or boxing, the rigours of training are unknown to the cricketer. True it is that at the beginning of the season he has to put in many hours of practice at the nets in order to rid himself of his winter stiffness, but of starvation and the getting off of weight he has no experience. And so this should be. Speaking generally, anybody under the age of thirty—one might even say thirty-five—should be able to engage in a reasonably vigorous pastime without recourse to a period of training. If he is not able to do so he is to be pitied, for he has allowed himself to run to seed, to the abuse of his body. One often hears the remark that So-and-so is the possessor of a wonderful eye, but one never stops to consider that there may be some reason for it. That some people are born with better eyesight than others may be granted, but given two people with, if possible, the same good eye, the one who is careful of his diet will score heavily off the other who pays no particular attention to the avoidance of any irregularities in his daily *régime*. One would have no particular fancy for the chances of Charles Fry obtaining a century if, on the eve of a test match, we received information that he had sampled in no uncertain manner the tempting menu of a Savoy dinner. Mr. Barrie, in an unmistakable manner, pointed out the source of one's little ills when he produced his play, *Little Mary*.

The cricketer should study the whims and fancies of that wayward maiden with more care than the wiles of the most insidious of "googly" bowlers. Diet plays a most important part in the life of a cricketer. So far it has been my good fortune to escape any incident in which drink has played an ugly part, but instances of over-feeding have been of common occurrence. A heavy luncheon on a hot day is a criminal act of foolhardiness, and yet such things do happen, with the usual result of ineptitude in the field. In the case of growing boys, with their ability to digest an ox with some facility, they might possibly escape the penalty, but for men with no curb on their appetites there is no hope. There is no need to fast, but there is great need to restrain gluttony. The three-quarters of an hour's interval allowed for luncheon is all too short, and the excessive exercise which a bowler, especially a fast one, undergoes on resumption of play sows the seeds of an impaired digestion.

One can lay down no hard-and-fast rule for methods by which one hopes to keep in a condition of athletic fitness. We have had all sorts of systems of physical culture foisted on us since Sandow, with his splendid physique, revealed himself to us. They must do good, for they involve regular exercise, but as they have the effect of *hardening* the muscles one cannot recommend them whole-heartedly. It is loose muscles, not taut, which are necessary for cricket, for the man with the iron-bound muscles is usually a trifle slow. He can lift enormous weights, but that accomplishment is not needed on the cricket-field. He ought to be able to hit the ball out of sight, and he might if he was quick enough to time it—but he isn't. It is the greatest mistake to imagine that strength is of enormous advantage in batting. Naturally it helps; but it is quickness which tells. The "Jam Sahib" hits the ball as hard as any one on the off side, and yet we should refrain from quoting him as a strong man. The best instance of a batsman who uses his strength to the utmost advantage is Charles Fry. We haven't any one who hits harder than he does when he lets himself go. It is fore-arm with him, whereas wrists do most of the work with "Ranji."

Whilst it is a great mistake to allow boys to do anything a little above their strength, yet it does occur to one that they might be taught to put the bat against the ball a little harder. Far be it from me to wish to convert the rising generation into a race of sloggers, but if as much attention was paid to the cultivation of "wrist" work as is bestowed on the old stereotyped exhortation "to play with a straight bat," then we should see perhaps more attractive batting. There is nothing like dumb-bell practice for the strengthening of the wrists, and the lighter they are in weight the better.

Apart from the fitness of a person's body, one has to take into consideration the state of his nerves. Instances innumerable might be quoted of very prominent cricketers, in the highest state of physical perfection as regards health, being stricken with nervousness—such a nervousness as only has its parallel in the about-to-be-stricken schoolboy awaiting his master's entry in the study. This deplorable condition—a condition which is much more frequent than is generally supposed—is in many instances a matter of temperament. And one can hardly argue about that. But there are things which aggravate the disease, for one can almost term it that. Late hours and over-indulgence in the soothing weed are contributory causes in no small manner. If one could be sure of obtaining truthful information on the point, it would be most interesting to learn the amount of tobacco consumed, and, more particular still, the age at which the consumption of it occurred. Nothing is more foolish and more deleterious to the nerves than smoking in boyhood. Without thorough control of one's nerves one cannot expect to achieve feats which require will and determination. The three cardinal rules which help in no uncertain manner to one's physical fitness are—Don't over-smoke, Don't over-feed, and Don't over-sleep.

A LAMENT

By W. M. THACKERAY

A weakness seizes on my mind—I would more pudding take;
But all in vain—I feel—I feel, my little head will ache.
Oh! that I might alone be left, to rest where now I am,
And finish with a piece of bread that pot of currant jam.

I gaze upon the cake with tears, and wildly I deplore
That I must take a powder if I touch a morsel more,
Or oil of castor, smoothly bland, will offer'd be to me,
In wave pellucid, floating on a cup of milkless tea.

It may be so—I cannot tell—I yet may do without;
They need not know, when left alone, what I have been about.
I long to cut that potted beef—to taste that apple-pie;
I long—I long to eat some more, but have not strength to try.

I gasp for breath, and now I know I've eaten far too much;
Not one more crumb of all the feast before me I can touch.
Susan, oh! Susan, ring the bell, and call for Mother dear!
My brain swims round—I feel it all—Mother, your child is queer!

THE RAID

A TALE OF ARDBOROUGH

By DESMOND COKE

MOTHER BURT's had always been the recognized meeting-place for Ardburians on Sunday afternoon. Recognized, that is, by the boys themselves; to the masters, officially, there was no tuck shop except that conducted by the school, and it was open only on week-days. As for the prefects—well, once made prefects, they went discreet walks in the opposite direction and tried to forget that they had ever been just ordinary boys or known of such a place as Mother Burt's. Sometimes, on hot afternoons, they would think regretfully of her cold milk and fresh-picked strawberries—but they were prefects now, and those were joys for them no longer. Mother Burt's was out of bounds, forbidden, and they must not go, as friends. As foes, they would not; for she had been an Ardborough institution during some thirty years. There were masters at the school who, as boys, had tasted of her dainties and enjoyed her friendship; but they, too, made an effort to forget.

Although, if there has ever been a forbidden thing that was both winked at and entirely harmless, it is this habit of spending Sunday's tea-time with old Mother Burt.

But all this must be changed, when Brickdale came as the head master. Almost everything was to be changed, in fact; Brickdale was a new broom, and he meant to sweep clean. Perhaps, in the end, Ardborough was better for it, but there were things that might have been left as they were, and chief of these ranks Mother Burt. From one-thirty until seven o'clock is a long interval between meals, for growing boys, and no tea-shop in the land could be better conducted or more cleanly than the little cottage perched upon the Downs.

It was not until his third term of office, in the summer, that Dr. Brickdale heard of this institution. The officious mother of a day boy (who had never been there) made it her duty to inform the new head master, who straightway sent for the head boy.

"Sit down, Appleton," he began, in his brisk tones, that always seemed to hint at action. "I want to speak to you."

Appleton shuddered. There had been so many things about which Brickdale had wished to speak, and each had meant reform, disturbance, trouble. The summer term was not made for reforms! He began to envy the easy life of his predecessor.

"Yes, sir," he said patiently.

The head master tapped a letter that lay upon his desk; even this he did with energy. "I have heard, Appleton—no matter from whom—that certain boys are in the habit of going, on Sunday afternoons, to a cottage close beside the Downs. Do you know anything of this?"

Appleton felt a strange confusion, almost guilt, as the keen eyes, too young-seeming for those of a head master, swung around suddenly, as though to pierce his brain.

"I—I know they used to go, some time ago, sir," he stuttered, nervous as a new boy. Mother Burt, two years ago, had been a valued friend.

"But there is a distinct school rule, that all cottages are strictly out of bounds. Have you made no attempt, since you were head of the school, to find out whether the breach of it still continues, and if so, to check it ?"

Brickdale was not an Old Ardburian, and now he gazed at his head boy as at rather a nerveless and feeble creature. Appleton, spurred by his look and by the wish to help old Mother Burt, was moved to explanation.

"It's only for milk or strawberries, sir. Fellows have always gone, since I remember."

But the head master, himself a man of iron discipline, no compromise, and boundless energy, failed totally to understand.

"They must go no more, Appleton. Please realize that, finally," he said firmly, and with something in his tone that spoke of scorn. "It makes no difference what they go for, or whether they have always gone; it is a matter of principle. What is the object of having rules, if they are broken ? Or prefects, if they do not see that things are right ? I rely on you, and your colleagues of the Sixth, to stop this breach of a school rule immediately."

"But——" began Appleton.

The head master held up his hand. (Ardborough found his firmness just a trifle tiring.) "There is no 'but,' Appleton. I instruct you, as my head boy, to go to this cottage, with others of the prefects, next Sunday, and to punish every boy whom you find on the premises."

Appleton's face fell, for here was a project unthinkable to an Ardburian, and, above all, to a former friend and patron.

Suddenly, he saw with joy a good plea of excuse. "I'm afraid, sir," he said, "they'd see us coming. The prefects *have* sometimes tried to raid the place, I rather think" (he spoke with doubt), "but the cottage is up on a hill, and some one keeps a look-out, so that the top-hats are seen in the distance, and every one goes out the other way." (Only prefects wear top-hats on Sunday, after morning chapel.)

Brickdale's eyes sparkled with the lust of battle. "That seems simple enough, Appleton," he answered. "You can divide your forces and approach it from all sides at once. Also, for this day, I will give the prefects leave to wear straw-hats in place of their usual top-hats."

Now it was the boy's turn to feel scorn, since the master, in his mania for detection, seemed to have infringed the laws of cricket. The prefects in disguise! One or two of the fellows had already suggested " Sherlock" as nickname for Brickdale, in place of the more obvious " Brick," which did not seem to suit him altogether.

But he was the head master, and here was an order given to a boy, though the head boy. There was no arguing, no disobedience possible; Appleton had made his protest, and had not succeeded.

" Yes, sir," he said, rather grudgingly, and walked with slow steps back into the prefects' library.

Wharton, at this moment, was its only occupant. He was second in the school, Appleton's rival, doing twice as much work but owning half the cleverness. It was the head boy's duty to be friendly to his lieutenant, but friendliness is often quite distinct from friendship. Appleton, burning with the desire to share his righteous indignation with a prefect, felt a chill settle on him when his eyes beheld the only specimen, and all his angry phrases fell from him. He did not even ask Wharton what he thought was the Brick's latest.

"Been seeing Brickdale," he said, almost calmly, when Wharton gazed up from his work, so soon as he had reached a full stop in his text.

"Oh! What about?" He spoke in very official tones, for he took his responsibilities in earnest and seemed a most important person, to himself.

" He wants us to put down Mother Burt's!"

Now, indeed, a certain note of angry scorn crept into his voice, but Wharton, to judge from his reply, did not observe it. "When? Next Sunday?" he answered, in the alert tones of a policeman. Frankly, the idea daunted him a little; this was a big thing to do, a thing sure of its opposition; but he owned a very lively sense of duty.

" Yes. Next Sunday."

Appleton said this absently, and for some moments stood in silent thought, so that Wharton began to peep once more at his Sophocles; he wanted, if he could, to reach a certain point before nightfall. He was just getting well into an awkward passage, when Appleton startled him by a remark.

"You know, Wharton, we can't do it."

Here was a new side in Appleton; he had not thought that he would funk! "Why not?" he asked coldly. It was something fresh, to be able to feel condescending.

"Why, surely you must see! There's no harm in the place; it's a school institution, and how the poor lady lives; and besides that, we've all been there ourselves."

Wharton laughed. "Perhaps *you* have! I haven't."

Something in the way he said this angered Appleton, and he had quite a struggle not to answer that "All the decent fellows, who weren't smugs," had been. But what could one gain by a row with Wharton? "Well, most men have," was his actual reply, "and the whole thing's all rot. Brickdale says there's a rule against it, and prefects ought to see that rules are kept; but it's a piffling rule."

"All the same," said Wharton, tilting his chair back and abandoning his poet for a moment, "I *do* think it puts us præs in a rather false position. I mean, it *is* a rule, and everybody breaks it. Why, some of the little blighters in my dormitory were talking about Mother Burt in front of *me*, the other night."

Appleton could not endure Wharton, when he grew superior. "I should have licked them," he said with emphasis, as he went out, and there was a hint of triumph in his face, for he knew that Wharton feared the scorned "blighters," and had never laid a hand—or brush—on any one of them. Feeling less irritated, he went in search of prefects who would summon greater indignation at the Brick's new edict.

Nor did he light on any stint of these. Every one said it was rotten, Brickish; but every one quite saw it must be done.

"What awful worms the school will think us!"

"And poor old Mother B.!"

"It's foul bad luck."

But Appleton, amid the din of protest, suddenly saw light. There was no second way; so much was clear. Brickdale had spoken, and Mother Burt's must undergo a raid. Yet some of the prefects noted an odd gleam in his eye, as he explained the details, later, in the sixth form room.

"All right, then; it's settled—Sunday afternoon. We'll start out, all of us, directly after school. The Brick wants us to divide forces, so we'll go two and two, and each approach from opposite directions. Better go in the form order: I'll take Wharton." (As the papers say, "A laugh.") "And the Brick specially wants us to wear straw hats, as toppers would be seen. That's quite plain, then. And of course it's understood that nobody will say a word to any one who's not a prefect." He said this last quite seriously, so that nobody could doubt his meaning it. There were those who had, secretly, seen a way out by warning one —just one!—of their friends, and—of course!—begging him not to warn the school at large, or he would spoil the raid. . . . But now, noting how earnestly Appleton, more frivolous till then, had said these words, they saw that he would go through with the scheme exactly as the Brick had wanted, and they felt a little shame. But every one had always recognized Appleton to be the best head boy that Ardborough had known for years.

So next Sunday saw the unwonted spectacle of all the prefects setting out in pairs, attired in the straw-hat of the mere ordinary mortal.

Others, too, saw the spectacle, and it seemed odd; for as a rule a prefect would not waste himself upon another, but go with some one who, otherwise, would not have been permitted out of bounds. Besides, straw-hats . . . ! Above all, Appleton and Wharton out together . . . Everybody, especially those setting out for Mother Burt's, saw and remarked upon it.

Dove was one of the first to see. Dove was, as a rule, not slow; he was a fairly new Ardburian, but he knew the ropes, and so far belied his name that more commonly he was called "Lark."

Now, having seen, enjoyed, and mocked (at a safe distance), he gripped the arm of his companion and hastened out into the country.

Half-an-hour later the farm-hand who, on Sundays, earned an extra wage as Mother Burt's assistant, perceived big boys approaching, two and two, from every side. They were so much larger than the usual patrons, and their tactics were so much those of a Volunteer field-day that, three-parts of an idiot as he was, he yet had sense to summon Mother Burt. Five minutes later, the cottage was in a state of siege.

Around it stood the fourteen prefects of Ardborough's royal found-

"SHE WISHED TO KNOW WHAT THOSE MISCHIEVOUS BOYS WERE A-DOING, PESTERING A RESPECTABLE WIDOW WOMAN OF A SUNDAY."

ation. The door had been tried, and the windows: both resisted. Spotless curtains hid the interior from view. Smoke wreathed quietly from the old red chimney of this idyllic cot; and that was all.

The fourteen prefects of Ardborough's royal foundation felt uncommonly like fools.

That sensation grew as, by twos and threes, Ardburians chanced to pass the spot, and naturally took an interest in the doings of their own sixth form. Soon there was a crowd up the roadway.

"Look here," said Appleton, "we must simply force our way inside, that's all. We can't go back and tell the Brick we weren't able to get in. So here goes." With which words he put his firm shoulder against the cottage door. But it was firmer, as indeed it was much older, and a snigger came from the growing group outside. Appleton's ire rose.

But as he debated the next move, an upper window was flung open and from it leaned old Mother Burt, indignant. Appleton had never known that she had such a flow of language. She wished to know what those mischievous boys were a-doing, pestering a respectable widow woman of a Sunday; and the moral of her homily was that, if they broke so much as a pane of glass or a door-bolt, she knew who'd have the law against them, that she did. There were both sense and legal knowledge in this last, and Appleton quite saw that they must not use force. Mother Burt retired, successfully, and with an angry slam of the small attic window. She thoroughly amused the mob.

Appleton began to lose his temper.

It seemed as though the whole school were behind him now; and obviously it was enjoying the performance. Yet he could not admit defeat.

Wharton, in this moment, was the man of inspiration. The occasion seemed to him quite epoch-making; he was in the midst of history, doing something; and his mind worked swiftly, aiming at success.

"I know, Appleton," he cried suddenly.

"What?" rather sharply.

"Wait till roll-call, and then see who isn't there, and make them prove that they weren't here."

Really, it was rather sound, and Appleton, whose keenness grew with opposition, was as anxious now to make a haul as he had been, before, to come back empty. He owed no ill-feeling to old Mother Burt, did not wish to suppress her cottage, but with all the school watching, this raid must not end in a fiasco. He pleased Wharton vastly by praising his idea, and the fourteen prefects sat down on the grass to wait.

But the comments of the crowd—its very presence—were a little trying.

"They want strawberries." "Sit down, won't you?" "Wharton's keen on milk." Witticisms such as these abounded, but never might their author be identified. Appleton could see no remedy. The road was in bounds (though the cottage was not), and they had every right to stand there; he could not move them on, like a policeman. They were breaking no rules, so that he might do nothing as prefect; as athlete, he could not set out to kick two hundred!

And whilst he sat there, blushing, with his fellows, a diversion offered. Once again the attic-window opened, and out leant the farm-lad. Those upon the road greeted him as an old friend.

"Hullo, Bert," the cry arose. "Rough luck!" and "Who's inside?" whilst from a squeaky voice came the advice to "hide them in the cellar." But Bert was looking at the enemy, and as chance willed it, his gaze fell first on Appleton, and being of quicker sight (though slower wit) than his employer, he knew him instantly as an old patron.

"Mäaster Appleton," he shouted, waving a tremulous finger of denunciation, "that be 'ee, sure enough. That be Mäaster Appleton;" and then overcome by the sight of such treachery, he rocked so that it seemed the rickety old window must fall out, and shouted in a frenzy, "Judas! *Judas!*"

Ardborough, upon the roadway, was delighted. Here was a name for Appleton better far than "Pear" or "Apple."

"Judas!" they howled happily, till Appleton looked round—and from that day he was called Judas by his friends, then Jew, in the next term Ikey, and finally just Mo; and thoroughly enjoyed the title.

But at the moment he was far distant from enjoyment. He was not used to failure, and never in his time of office had he found himself in a posture so humiliating. Technically, he could do nothing, but anger does not reason, and as the crowd grew more hilarious—murmurs and whispers turning to mockery—he rose, swung about, and walked up to the fence. A sudden silence fell upon them all. Each tried not to feel either a fool or afraid, and with their inane half-smiles frozen on their faces, they struck him as a rotten enough set. A rapid glance showed none of the big fellows that he knew. Above all, it showed him Dove, close up in the front, still entertained; one of the few not to grow humble at this overwhelming presence; smiling right across his face; cheery, hatless, and dishevelled. Appleton chose him as victim.

"What do you imagine you're playing at, Dove?" he asked scornfully. "And where's your hat? You aren't a slum child. Why don't you go and get clean, instead of minding other people's business? This is jolly funny, isn't it? but if you don't look out, you won't be so amused at sixers." ("Sixers" is Ardburian for the law courts of the prefects, where small boys get beaten.)

Dove's smile died; but when Appleton turned away, the others—as is a crowd's way—gave a half-cheer and muffled chuckle of amusement. Before long they were as happy as before.

It was decidedly a real relief when roll-call drew near. Two by two, prudent boys began to break from the crowd and to retrace their steps, in fear of punishment, whilst the prefect whose turn it was to read the list set off school-wards, amid ironic applause. Clearly the besiegers meant to wait till after roll-call, perhaps (some one suggested) even overnight, and it was not worth while to get a lot of beastly punishments, just to see the end, though it had been an awful rag. . . . Slowly they went off, and left the prefects to their own devices.

Presently, while they debated as to how long they should stay before return, the front door, with much groaning of a hinge, was opened, and Mother Burt stood peering at them. Bowing, speaking with the gorgeous, slow irony of her class, she asked them if they were not tired and would not care to enter. If they liked her garden so much, perhaps her house would please them. And more to that effect.

They hung back for a little, rather ashamed; to many this taste of Mother Burt's sarcasm came as a reminder of old days; but presently Appleton said, "Come along, we must go in. Otherwise the Brick'll think us rotters."

"Besides," said Wharton, quite self-assertive since his bright suggestion, "we shall make *certain* of the fellows then."

Old Mother Burt, still bowing sardonically, stood by the door, as hostess, beckoning them. With old eyes burning dimly in their wrinkled caverns she scrutinized the boys, seeming to know them and yet not quite remembering, until as Appleton came past, her face changed, and she said, as though somebody had spoken the name to her, "Appleton!" and then less dazed, "It's Mr. Appleton."

For an instant her face had lit with pleasure (he had been a special favourite), but in the next, she seemed to remember his treachery, for she turned away from him, even as, unthinking, he held out his hand.

Appleton was hurt. All his detective keenness of an hour ago died suddenly; he no longer felt that he was on his mettle to emerge triumphant and make captures, but was well content to go and tell Brickdale that he had found the cottage empty. And this first big room, the actual tea-room, *was* empty; surely that sufficed? He had no wish to ruin Mother Burt. Her recognition, together with the sight of those neat tables loaded with their dainties, had quite damped his ardour.

"No one here," he said in relief; and the others, feeling much the same, kept up the pretence of being satisfied by search, and said, "No, nobody."

But Wharton, for one, had no such memories, and his blood was roused. The others struck him as most strangely unsuspicious. He was not so easily to be convinced!

"But look here, Appleton," he said, pointing, "there's another room. They might all be in that, and some one ought to go up-stairs."

Appleton, mentally abusing him, must make pretence of gratitude for the suggestion, whilst Mother Burt, acidly agreeable, insisted that every one must go anywhere, and all make themselves thoroughly at home. The idiot farm-lad stood by, sullenly regarding "Judas."

And now the last-named could not satisfy his sense of duty or his head master without thorough search, when once it had been suggested and allowed. Two were sent up-stairs, whilst he himself approached the other down-stair room. As he reached it, well remembered as an overflow tea-room, Wharton, hugely keen, pressed forward. They entered it together.

And on them, together, fell a sticky mess of strawberry and milk.

The booby-trap trickled, in thick clots, down their clothes, and the straw-hat which had held it dropped, with a sticky squelch, on to the tiled floor.

Appleton picked the hat up gingerly. Inside its crown were scrawled four letters—D.O.V.E.

"*I* believe," said Wharton disconsolately, as the unlucky thirteen retraced their steps, "that the fellows saw us starting out and spotted what we were up to, because of our straw-hats. That was what did it."

"Yes," answered Appleton. "That was what did it—the straw-hats."

But he did not sound half so upset as the other had expected. He seemed to worry most about his clothes.

. . . . . .

Dr. Brickdale was relieved, that evening, to hear from his head boy that the prefects, using all his suggested subtlety of tactics, had raided the tea-place, and yet found it empty.

"Thank you, Appleton," he said briskly, "that is most satisfactory," and well contented he turned his mind to new lines of reform. The tea-shop scandal was all over.

But of course he was not in the sixth-form room, next morning, to hear the tremor with which Appleton asked, "Would you like to appeal to the head master ?" (the usual formula), nor to note the relief with which his prefects greeted the negative reply of Dove, who was both prudent and a sportsman. Again, he did not hear the thwack of the six hard ones against Dove's tight-drawn flannels, as Maitland (of both first elevens) exercised his muscles, nor see the writhings of that gentle humorist. In fact, thanks to Dove's heroic "No," the head master of Ardborough has never known that one of his pupils suffered punishment on the very day after it had been proved triumphantly that no one ever went inside the tea-place on the Downs.

And if you want an Ardburian on Sunday afternoon, you will be sure of finding him at Mother Burt's.

THE LITTLE DRUMMER

By RICHARD HENRY STODDART

'Tis of a little drummer,
    The story I shall tell;
Of how he marched to battle,
    And all that there befell.
Out in the West with Lyon
    (For once the name was true)
For whom the little drummer beat
    His rat-tat-too.

Our army rose at midnight,
    Ten thousand men as one,
Each slinging on his knapsack,
    And snatching up his gun;
"Forward!" and up they started,
    As all good soldiers do,
When the little drummer beats for them
    The rat-tat-too.

Across a rolling country,
    Where the mists began to rise;
Past many a blacken'd farmhouse,
    Till the sun was in the skies;
Then we met the rebel pickets,
    Who skirmish'd and withdrew,
While the little drummer beat and beat
    The rat-tat-too.

THE LITTLE DRUMMER

Along the wooded hollows
The line of battle ran.
Our centre pour'd a volley,
And the fight at once began;
For the rebels answer'd shouting,
And a shower of bullets flew;
But still the little drummer beat
His rat-tat-too.

He stood among his comrades,
As they quickly form'd the line,
And when they raised their muskets,
He watch'd the barrels shine!
When the volley broke he started,
For war to him was new;
But still the little drummer beat
His rat-tat-too.

It was a sight to see them,
That early autumn day;
Our soldiers in their blue coats,
And the rebel ranks in grey;
The smoke that roll'd between them,
The balls that whistled through,
And the little drummer as he beat
His rat-tat-too.

His comrades dropp'd around him,
By fives and tens they fell,
Some pierced by Minie bullets,
Some torn by shot and shell.
They play'd against our cannon,
And a caisson's splinters flew:
But still the little drummer beat
His rat-tat-too.

THE LITTLE DRUMMER

The right, the left, the centre—
    The fight was everywhere;
They push'd us here—we waver'd—
    We drove and broke them there.
The greybacks fix'd their bayonets,
    And charged the coats of blue,
But still the little drummer beat
    His rat-tat-too.

"Where is our little drummer?"
    His nearest comrades say,
When the dreadful fight is over,
    And the smoke has clear'd away.
As the rebel corps were scattering,
    He urged them to pursue;
So furiously he beat and beat
    The rat-tat-too.

He stood no more among them,
    For a bullet as it sped
Had glanced and struck his ankle,
    And stretch'd him with the dead.
He crawl'd behind a cannon,
    And pale and paler grew,
But still the little drummer beat
    His rat-tat-too.

They bore him to the surgeon,
    A busy man was he:
"A drummer-boy—what ails him?"
    His comrades answer'd, "See!"
As they took him from the stretcher
    A heavy breath he drew,
And his little fingers strove to beat
    The rat-tat-too.

THE LITTLE DRUMMER

The ball had spent its fury:
“A scratch,” the surgeon said,
As he wound the snowy bandage
Which the lint was staining red!
“I must leave you now, old fellow.”
“O take me back with you,
For I know the men are missing me,
And the rat-tat-too!”

Upon his comrades’ shoulders
They lifted him so grand,
With his dusty drum before him
And his drum-sticks in his hand!
To the fiery front of battle,
That nearer, nearer drew,—
And evermore he beat and beat
His rat-tat-too.

The wounded as he passed them
Look’d up and gave a cheer:
And one in dying bless’d him,
Between a smile and tear!
And the greybacks, they are flying
Before the coats of blue,
For whom the little drummer beats
His rat-tat-too.

When the west was red with sunset
The last pursuit was o’er;
Brave Lyon rode the foremost,
And look’d the name he bore!
And before him on his saddle,
As a weary child would do,
Sat the little drummer fast asleep
With his rat-tat-too.

PRISONERS ON A POLAR ISLE

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

It is somewhat unfortunate that I can allege nothing more romantic as the cause of Johnnie Gilchrist's going to sea than a look at a book. Johnnie was an only son, a strong, sturdy lump of a lad, and as nice-looking as any boy need be at fourteen, for even down in sleepy, leafy Ross-shire such young fellows don't grow on gooseberry bushes. Johnnie was his father's hope and his mother's pride, and as for his sisters, they believed there was no boy who ever wore boots who was worthy to hold a candle to their brave brother.

The boy had never asked himself the question what he should like to be, and if any one had questioned him, he would probably have answered—

"Oh, a farmer like my father, I suppose."

It had been a quiet homely Christmas dinner, and yet the odour of that well-done turkey would have brought a dying man back to the gates of health. And such a prince of a pudding! A huge globe of rich brown lusciousness surmounted by the green of glittering holly, the crimson of berries rare, while the blue glare of the burning brandy spread a halo over all.

In Scotland, few of my readers will need to be told, Christmas is not kept as it is in England. It is no national holiday. But Mrs. Gilchrist was herself a native of the great green land that lies south of the silvery Tweed, and she would not have been content to have this day passed over entirely, so here in the fine old-fashioned drawing-room more than one honest farmer and his wife, with their children as well, were assembled, while near to the head of the table was the minister himself; and when at last all retired to the drawing-room, no wonder that

"The nicht drave on wi' sangs and clatter," and that later on the young folks had Christmas games and a dance. But our hero, Johnnie Gilchrist, had not stayed for that, because in the forenoon, while rummaging in his father's old library, he had managed to unearth that book. He had slipped early and quietly away therefrom, begged a big candle from the cook, then stolen up-stairs to his garret among the tiles, to turn in and revel in the rich fascinations of *Tom Cringle*.

When Johnnie did fall asleep at last with the *Log* under his pillow he had a champion nightmare to commence with, and after that it was dream, dream, all night long, till the pigeons tapping on the window-ledge and Mary the maid on the door told him it was time to get up. But Johnnie's dreams had not been all unpleasant. Very much the reverse. They had taken him all over the world by sea and land, especially by sea, so that by the time he had finished his cold tub and his toilet, he felt himself a thorough old sailor.

Not only that, but he had quite made up his mind that a sailor he would be, and he sang aloud as he brushed his impossible hair—

"With a hey, and a ho! as the winds do blow,
As we go rolling home. Hurrah!"

There was quite a sea roll in his gait as he made his way to the breakfast-room. The maid noticed, too, that he hitched up his trousers, and turned his quid—a lump of eating chocolate—before he entered.

He kissed his mother breezily, and said, "What cheer, my hearties?" to his sisters, instead of the usual mild "Good-morning."

Quite wonderful, isn't it, what a book can do? Our hero had gone to bed a farmer's boy. He had awakened a sailor. But where would Johnnie spend his next Christmas? Ah! where indeed!

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"It is our first grief, you know, Jack," said Johnnie's mother next week to a brother who had come on a visit. "Of course sorrows will come, but heigho!—and Johnnie is our only boy."

"Ah, well, Mary, even if the worse, as you put it, should come to the worst, there is many a worse life than that of a sailor"

Captain Jack Runciman looked the very embodiment of the truth he was trying to inculcate—round-faced, rosy, happy-go-lucky, and smiling—and he emitted another cloud of smoke as he settled back in his chair.

" He seems determined to go to sea ? " he added presently.

" Yes, brother, yes. Never reads anything now but sea stories, and when he talks in his sleep it is all about ships, and his sisters are quite as unhappy as I am. He has bought a model of a full-rigged ship, and reads the *Sailor's Pocket-Book* instead of the *Pilgrim's Progress*."

" Ha, ha, ha ! Excuse me laughing, Mary, but blow me if I don't rather admire the lad. But keep up your pecker, old girl. I'm going for a run with him this afternoon, and I'll tell him what the sea is."

Captain Runciman did have a run with Johnnie that day, and Johnnie puffed his good uncle too, for walking across a rough bit of country isn't so easy for an old sailor as it may be along the decks of a rolling ship. The captain was fain to seat himself under a pine-tree at last, and light his meerschaum.

" You love a life on the ocean wave, don't you, uncle ? "

" Love it, lad ? I hate it like poison."

And there and then he launched forth into such a terrible story of the sea, its dangers and sufferings, and the inconveniences of living imprisoned in a tossing, rolling, pitching wooden box, with but a plank between one and eternity, interspersed with heart-rending tales of storm and shipwreck, and life upon rafts, and all the rest of it, as would have frightened any ordinary boy. Johnnie was no ordinary boy evidently, for he listened entranced, and all he said, when the captain had finished, was, " Go on, uncle, it's capital ; tell me some more."

" Now, Mary," said the skipper that same evening, " I've tried to talk the boy over. It is no use. But I am going to Shetland next week in my *Norlan Queen*, and I'll take him with me, and if that doesn't give him a sickener of the sea, why, then, he's born to be a sailor, and we're bound to make the best of him. I guess he'll want to come back from Lerwick by train, but as there is no railway across the ocean, he'll need to ship it back or swim."

" Oh dear, oh dear," sighed poor Mrs. Gilchrist, and some of Johnnie's sisters began to cry.

But the boy got rigged out all the same, and sailed with his uncle in the *Norlan Queen.* Johnnie, I may mention, had up till now been so far from extravagant that he possessed a dozen pounds in the savings bank, and this—in case of eventualities—he took with him. Also his gun, for, brought up as he had been on a sporting farm, far up the Don, the lad was a prodigy shot. Seemed, so his uncle said, to have been born with a gun in his mouth.

PRISONERS ON A POLAR ISLE

It was early in February, and in the north seas at this time of year the weather is fearfully stormy and wild. Indeed, it took Captain Runciman's ship a whole week to reach the snow-clad hills around Brassey Sound, where he cast anchor opposite Lerwick.

Many years ago, when the seal and whale fleet was mostly composed of sailing ships, it assembled here to ship extra hands, and they sailed for the far north about the middle of February, not knowing how long it might take them to reach the sea of ice, which they were bound to sight ere the seals took to the pack to have their puppies. On the skins and blubber of these unhappy pups, and those of their dams, the vessels depended for their cargoes.

In his voyage from Scotland, instead of being sea-sick all the time, as his uncle had fondly hoped he would be, Johnnie never missed a meal, and fed far more heartily than ever he had done on shore.

Fully forty sail of the sealing fleet were here in the sound at anchor, gently rising and falling with the swell, tens of thousands of beautiful sea-birds tacking and half-tacking around them all day long—a romantic and glorious scene, with lofty Mount Brassey towering over all.

"Uncle," said Johnnie, "you're a brick for bringing me to this lovely place."

The captain didn't know what to answer. But Johnnie was on shore every day now with his gun, tramping along the seashore or over the barren hills, and often he caught himself a Shetland pony and had a splendid bare-back ride for miles upon miles. Oh, it really was the best of fun.

But one day as he sat on a stone with a lot of rabbits and a hare or two at his feet, he saw a figure coming slowly towards him.

"A keeper, I suppose," thought the lad. "Never mind."

But it wasn't. He was a tall, dark, brown-skinned, seafaring man.

"Been watching you shooting," he said kindly. "By Jove, you're a crack shot!"—Johnnie grew scarlet with pride—"I'm first mate of the *Melinka* yonder. That big barque with the top-gallants. Wouldn't we like to have you on the ice! A good shot is worth a fortune out yonder."

The boy jumped for joy.

"Could it be managed, think you, sir?" he eagerly asked. "I'll go like a rick on fire."

"Tell me all your story first," said the mate, and Johnnie did so.

Then the mate considered for some time.

"You see," he said at last, "the skipper daren't take you without your parents' consent. But——"

"What's the *but?*" said Johnnie.

"Well, lad, we sail in a couple of days' time, and I'd take the risk of stowing you away, if you came alongside in a shore boat after dark."

In his enthusiasm Johnnie grasped the mate's hard hand.

"I'll be there," he cried.

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Never did money come in handier than did that which Johnnie had drawn from the savings bank. It bought all the outfit which he was likely to need for the Arctic regions. And this in a big box was addressed to the mate of the *Melinka*, and sent on board on the afternoon of her sailing.

There was a terrible bustle and stir on the ship when Johnnie himself came off and quietly slipped down to Mac's cabin. Mac was the mate, and he was never called by any other name. Now the skipper was a very particular man, and never failed to muster all hands before sailing. The crew all told was paraded on the upper deck, and had to answer to their tallies (names). After that Captain Sellar and the young doctor went round the ship and saw that everything was correct and no stowaways on board. But Johnnie was there nevertheless. For the mate had made him eat and drink heartily, and then taken him forward and locked him in the dark of the coal bunkers.

"A rum start," said the boy to himself. "Shouldn't mind if I had a light."

He had plenty of rugs and plaids, however, so he lay down on a shelf to await eventualities.

In an hour's time there was a terrific din and much shouting overhead, for they were getting the anchor up. Then, soon after that, it was nothing but heave and plunge, and the lad knew the ship was off to sea.

"Uncle will have my letter to-morrow," thought Johnnie, "and mother and sisters will know all in about a week."

Then he fell soundly to sleep.

It must have been hours after that when he awoke with a start. He had tumbled right off, and was struck with several pieces of coal before he could regain his perch, for the *Melinka* was pitching and rolling most uncomfortably, evidently in the grip of a wild storm. The dust from the coals, moreover, was almost suffocating, but he managed to regain his perch, and fastened himself with his scarf to a ring-bolt by his side. Then he pulled the warm rugs right over his head, and like a true-born British sailor was soon sound asleep once more.

It must have been morning when he awoke next time. The dust was worse than ever, and Mac, the mate, must have entirely forgotten him. In fact, Mac had taken an extra glass of grog at eight bells in the middle watch, and was now comfortably snoring.

What was to be done? The boy was starving with hunger. But presently the door of his prison was thrown open, and the daylight of a wintry morning streamed into the bunkers. It was the cook's slush boy who had come for coals. But this was enough. And Johnnie with a shriek of joy sprang right over him on to the deck, nearly frightening the lad quite out of his wits. Bar his red lips and white eyeballs, Johnnie was as black as the coals he had slept among. A fearful apparition indeed, so it was no wonder that the superstitious seamen fled in every direction. But little recked Johnnie. Tightening his rug around him, he made a wild dash for the saloon and quickly descended. The captain himself, the doctor and second mate, had already sat down to breakfast, but they sprang from their seats in terror, and the steward yelled, and dropped his dish of ham and eggs on the deck.

"Who or what are you?" cried the skipper aghast.

"The hungriest boy that ever lived, sir. For goodness' sake, steward, give me a plate and a knife and fork."

Luckily for Johnnie, Mac himself entered at that moment, and as soon as he could speak for laughing explained all.

There was more laughing now, and as soon as the lad had eaten something he was hurried away to have a wash and a tidy-up, returning in a few minutes looking quite the young gentleman.

"Master John Gilchrist, sir, the best shot that ever drew trigger. Will lay the seals dead by hundreds!"

That was Johnnie's introduction.

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Shorter and shorter grew the days now, and stormier and stormier the seas, as the ship ploughed further north into the darkness of the Arctic. But this was an exceptional year. Every sailor on board the barque who had been a dog's watch at sea told Johnnie that. The skipper and his sturdy mate Mac had been going back and fore to "the country," as Greenland is called, for twenty years, but had never before seen such weather, such fearful seas, such gales, such frost. Men were working even by lantern light, and all throughout the short days with crowbar and stanchion, digging the ice from the bows in order to get a poor five knots out of her. Decks washed fore and aft, splintered booms, bulwarks riven, till they looked like sheep hurdles, the great iron winch itself, round which the anchor chain is wound, lifted and shifted by the might of the waves, and the vessel altogether about as near being a floating wreck as any craft that ever scudded under bare poles. And the intensity of the cold who shall describe? When the clouds did lift for an hour or two by day, and the blue sky could be seen, the decks were of glass, and the powdered snow blew in choking clouds.

Down below it was fairly warm, because immense fires were kept burning both fore and aft, and it was only when at night the men and officers turned into their coffin-like cribs that the intensity of the frost could be calculated.

"Do you think that I'm the Jonah?" said Johnnie to his friend Mac one forenoon, as they were both holding on, apparently by their eyelashes, to the weather stays.

"Why, what put that in your head, sonny?"

"Well, you see, I deceived my mother and uncle. I think, Mr. Mac, if you get the men to toss me overboard, the weather will turn fine at once."

Mac liked a good laugh, and he had one now.

But the storms did cease at last, and they made up their leeway, till one morning from the crow's-nest they sighted the ice blink far away to the nor'ard and east. All sorts of bergs now, and all kinds of shapes, and streams of slush, which it was difficult to get through. They commenced to search for seals or signs of seals. They met and talked to the *Green Dutchman*, and kept company with this ship for two weeks, for if any one could find seals, walruses, or even whales, the skipper of that craft was the man. So every ship followed her.

And find seals he did, in two great packs, male and female, away down among the low snow-clad bergs of pancake ice. The two ships lay dodging off the ice for a couple of weeks to permit the pups to grow a bit. The constant moaning or bleating of the poor things was incessant. Then the vessels were rove in through the great pack, the crew went over the sides, and the terrible slaughter of the innocents commenced. The snow that erst was so pure and white was now brown with blood all over, the inky black sea was alive with sharks—the awful Arctic sharks—and all over the pack roamed huge bears in scores. Neither Mac nor the skipper had ever seen so many bears.

Johnnie, with his revolver-rifle, proved himself indeed a prodigy. It was said that his every shot told home, and on every berg his dead seals could be counted by the score. So happy were the men that they used to come singing home to the ship with the lad carried shoulder high.

In less than a month, so great was their luck, they were almost full ship, and Johnnie's rifle was now turned against the bears. He had many narrow escapes, for they had grown terribly savage.

The seals all left the pack in one night, and the frost soldered every berg together, imprisoning the vessels; but the bears that had come to feed off the dead did not leave, and the boy had marvellous sport. He and little Tim, the cook's slush boy, were excellent friends, and with the help of a couple of Shetlanders they constructed a castle of the clear blocks of ice found lying about on the top of the bergs.

Now there is nothing Bruin loves so much as a roasted ham-bone. And the boys in their castle, which they had called Fresh Water Ice Fort, burned bones, and the bears came from all directions, lured by the smell, and expecting a treat. They had it, for Johnnie and Tim were inside that fort, Tim loading, Johnnie firing; and half-a-dozen splendid skins fell to our hero's rifle in one day, and five the next. Bruin was shy after this. He thought bacon bones had gone up in price, and dead seals were cheaper. But little Tim came to grief, for a wounded bear sprang suddenly on to the snowy rampart and hit the lad. Luckily it was on the softest end of him, but he was carried nearly twenty feet through the air before he brought up on the hard snow again on the softest but heaviest end of him. Poor lad, for a week after that adventure he said he just hated to sit down.

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A gale from the south-east, the like of which the oldest sailor on the *Melinka* had never witnessed. It came on suddenly too. There was no night here at this season. The sun just went round and round the sky, low at midnight, high at noon; but when those storms came there was the darkness of winter around the ships, so close did the clouds hug the pack. Bay ice between the bergs was broken into fragments, and piled high over the snow, and the noise was indescribable—grinding, tearing, shrieking, howling, with many a loud explosion intermixed. But the mist flakes that were falling were soft. No one on board either the foreigner or the Scotch ship expected the vessel could live, and bags and provisions were taken on deck ready to disembark on the very bergs that should accomplish their destruction.

Do what he might Johnnie—silly lad—having been religiously nurtured, could not dispossess his mind of the idea that this tornado had been sent to punish him for deceiving his mother.

They said that, as far back as the oldest man in the seal fleet could remember, old Von Brocken, skipper of the *Green Dutchman*, had been going back and fore to the Sea of Ice after whales, seals or walruses. A queer old fellow he was, very fat, with cheeks like ripe tomatoes, and long hair as white as the Arctic snows. He hated the Scotch fleet, because its ships followed him. But even he had never witnessed so great a transformation scene as that which met his gaze when he went on deck next day. Sea calm, *Melinka* lying motionless, but not a bit of ice in sight—all had been floated south and away on wind and current.

"Ho, ho!" he said to himself, and laughed, then stumped down to breakfast.

Mr. Newton, his mate, was not so old, but nearly as fat as the skipper. Fat, jolly and round. He was an Englishman, who seemed to have been born at a bean-feast and been feasting ever since.

Von Brocken was talking to himself when Newton came into the saloon and sat down.

"Vos I capitan of my own sheep? I vos. Vos I clever? I vos. But dese Scotch sheep dey follow Von Brocken eberyvere. I veel now lead de *Melinka* von leetle dance. Ho, ho!"

Two hours after this came a breeze from the south'ard and east, and away went the *Green Dutchman*, followed by the *Melinka*, as cock-robin might follow a cuckoo. For a whole week they kept on, and were now far to the west. But then a white fog rose up from the sea, and when it cleared off there was no *Green Dutchman*, but down to leeward a strange, weird-looking but romantic island. Frost again that day, and so hard that the *Melinka* was speedily icebound and immovable. But soon out from the island, borne along by the current, came a stream of great flat hummocky bergs and surrounded her. The frost got harder, and things grew serious. Von Brocken had indeed led the *Melinka* "von leetle dance."

Three months passed by, and all that time the ship never once moved.

Hard and fast in a prison of ice. The stillness of nothingness or death all around without its darkness. No bird nor beast to be seen save on the adjacent island. One hundred miles at least from the sea. No wonder Mate Mac and the captain looked puzzled and sad. But worse was to come. The sun sunk so low now that there was fully two hours of night. A gale of wind seemed raging from the east, the noise of crashing ice and shrieking of the bergs was deepening, and these bergs rose and fell on invisible billows beneath.

She was in the nips, and raised full fifteen feet on the starboard side.

A louder shriek from the ice than usual, a terrible cry from the crew on board. Lo! the ship was stove. One cruel berg had nearly cut her keel off, and the next nip laid her with broken yard-arms, bulwarks and a mast, prone on her beam ends on the adjacent berg.

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In all such emergencies Greenland sailors need not to be told what to do. But the captain was calm, and so were officers and men Wind

and seas and ice went down, but a fire had broken out in the galley, and it was a fight for life to put it out. But they did.

"This means wintering on yonder isle," said Mac the mate ruefully.

"That's so," returned the captain, "and we must prepare."

"Johnnie," said the mate, with his hand on the boy's shoulder, "you are light of foot, so take your dinner with you and your rifle, and go with Tim to that island. You'll find a cave, I'm sure. Come back and tell us."

Johnnie was very glad to be of use. It kept the Jonah out of his mind. Then the day was so bright, and the sunshine so gladdening, that before they reached the island both boys were singing. They found, not one cave, but two, facing the shore, and three great bears sprang out of the intense darkness to give them greeting. Tim was knocked down, Johnnie shot the biggest bear, and the other two escaped. Then they entered, and finding dried bushes lit a fire. The smoke curled up and escaped into some crevice; but, lo! both lads stood aghast to find in a corner a huge pile of human bones, evidently shipwrecked mariners.[1] Some of the bones had been gnawed, and this told the lads a terrible tale.

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Forty-and-four men now set to work to make that cave comfortable to winter in, if indeed they could survive so long. The captain knew that as soon as the bergs should float the ship would slip and sink, so every available portable thing had to be saved. Food and clothing first, bed and bedding and cooking utensils. Then the coals, and all the woodwork, spars and canvas that could be hauled on shore. The men worked in relays all day long, getting but little sleep. But they had food enough and plenty to drink, and a sailor never loses heart while there is a shot in the locker or a dram in the bottle.

When at last they took up their abode in the cave they left the poor *Melinka* an empty shell, for even the bulkheads were landed for firewood. The huge sides of beef that had hung frozen in the rigging were buried in the snow near the cave, and covered with planks to protect them from the bears.

They were in winter quarters. Snug enough for the time being, perhaps, yet prisoners on a polar isle, with the outlook as black as black could be. In all such cases it is best to hope, and yet it would be some time before they could even realize their position. And it would be nine months before there was the slightest chance of getting free, and even the officers had not the remotest idea how freedom should come. They would be reported lost, no doubt, but search-parties are seldom if ever got up to save the lives of sealers. The gates of hope were closed by those terrible streams of ice that had floated towards the lonely island and joined the pack, until at least a hundred miles now separated them from the open sea. Then they were quite out of the track of the sealer or whaler.

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[1] That of the crew, we think, of the ill-fated *Polaric.*

" Well, Mac," said the good skipper, " there isn't much hope for us, but one thing we *can* do, and that is to see that our men are as comfortable and happy as possible."

" That's it, sir," said Mac, " that's it."

Then they lit their pipes.

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A survey of stores was ordered for next day. There would be a feeling of satisfaction in computing how long there was a possibility of living. The survey occupied many days, because it was thorough, and they found that with economy they could make the provisions and the necessaries of life last for a whole year.

The men smiled to themselves and to each other to see the huge bales of nigger-head baccy, and the sturdy rum casks that had been brought on shore. Pointing to one of the latter, big Tom Philip said to a chum—

" If the worst comes to the worst, Bill, I mean to die jolly drunk."

This was reprehensible. Tom was a deserter, and often remarked that " the sodjers " were never going to catch him alive-o.

The skipper, as well as the doctor, knew the value of work for the men, as well as recreation and exercise; and a rigid drill and discipline, therefore, were instituted from the very first. The men soon knew that any disobedience of orders would be looked upon as a crime against the whole community, and punished accordingly.

The large cave seemed to have been just cut out for Crusoes, for there were several smaller ones leading right off it, like cabins in a ship. These were easily transformed into officers' state-rooms, and one was the store-room for baccy and rum. This was well guarded, with always an armed sentry over it.

The cave had been thoroughly cleansed and ventilated, and the doctor believed it healthy and wholesome; but, alas! he eventually changed his mind on this score. The pile of bones had, of course, been buried in the sea. An ice-hole was opened, and in this the men could fish when the weather was open, and many a fine young cod and smallock were landed to add to the larder. Fresh water there was none, but ice and snow to melt in abundance.

Black and bare were the hills on this little island, even while summer and autumn lasted; but as long as the sun shone and the land was covered with lichen, moss, wild poppies, and a stunted heath, as long as the rocks were brown and grey, and walks and rambles could be taken without discomfort or danger, the hearts of these Crusoes beat high with hope.

Johnnie and Tim were always together on the war-path, as our hero phrased it, and though there was little to shoot except a white fox, bears, or Arctic hares, they really never returned without something.

One evening the two friends had been longer away than usual, and just as Mac the mate was beginning to think something had happened, for the sun was nearly setting, they were seen coming slowly down the hill, each with a big white ball in his arms. The balls proved to be baby bears, the mother of which, having attacked them, they were bound to slay in self-defence, else I'm sure they ne'er would have done so cruel an action.

"The least we can do now," said Johnnie to Tim, "is to be mother and father to these bonnie babies."

The little bears quite took to them, and, strange to say, slept in their arms every night, thus helping to keep them warm.

It is only ill-used animals that turn savage. These bears did not. They were as docile as cats, and followed their "mother and father" about everywhere, as if they had been two little lambs, and Johnnie and Tim two little Marys.

It is as well to mention here that they grew wonderfully, and soon weighed more than mastiff dogs; but as they never snarled nor growled, their liberty was not begrudged them. They were great fun too.

Johnnie instituted himself steward to the captain, and the first thing he did of a morning was to boil a big kettle of fresh-water ice and make a cup of tea for him and Mac the mate. So he was of some use.

Yes, as long as the sun shone our hero was happy, and it was only when the nights began to get long and cold and dark and drear that he lost heart a little, and asked Mac frequently if he did consider him a Jonah, and whether he did not think it would be best to put him down the ice-hole.

Mac the mate always laughed at the boy when he talked like this, but that the boy was in downright earnest he knew quite well. Some would have called Johnnie superstitious. Nevertheless it is just from such as he that real heroes ofttimes spring.

But all hands were saddened by an event which occurred about a month before Christmas. It was found that in spite of the sentry, the spirit store had been tampered with, and a quantity of rum was missed. It was hardly necessary to guess who the thief was, for the deserter Philip was found next morning raving in his bunk, and when brought before the captain, though at first he pretended to be reckless and amusing, he suddenly lost all control over himself, and, dashing his captors savagely to the ground, escaped—and was seen no more alive. His mangled body was found next day by the shore at the foot of an ice-cliff. He was accorded a sailor's grave in the deep black ocean of the Arctic, and there will rest in peace till the sea gives up its dead.

. . . . . .

There were a good many Englishmen in the *Melinka*—brave sealers from Hull—and wishing to let the men have as much amusement and fun as possible, the captain determined to keep Christmas, and the Scots could have their New Year's Day after.

This was an excellent arrangement, and pleased all hands. And though the sun had gone and would not be seen again for months, that Christmas day and night was more beautiful than transformation scenes in a fairy pantomime. The stars glittered like Kohinoors, the Aurora made the whole island, now clad in virgin-snow, as bright almost as day. There was a big full moon, too, though its beams were dimmed by the flicking, flashing, dancing rays of the gorgeously coloured northern light.

The dinner was a great success, and for this once the crew, all told, sat down together. It was noticed by the mate that poor Johnnie sent his plate only once for pudding, and shook his head sadly, but firmly, when Mac pressed him to have another helping. The evening was spent in song and conversation, till the ship's fiddles struck up a merry hornpipe, when the men trooped out, and for two whole hours the fun was fast and furious. Well, it was all innocent mirth, they slept all the better for it, and were up betimes next morning.

The captain, early in January, had many a private meeting with his mates to discuss the probabilities of getting off this lonely island. The chances were, indeed, against them, for the previous summer had been an exceptional one, and the ice might not open again so far north and west for many a long year. And the likelihood of any search expedition being got up for their relief was sadly remote. Yet they did not let down their hearts.

Months went by, and at last the first glimpse of the returning sun shone red across the eastern snows. Then hope took a joyous leap, and even the men began to talk of what they would do when they should return once more to home and friends. Conversation and song went on all day long now, but, alas! all this had a speedy and terrible ending, for once again death visited the crew. An awful avalanche fell only a few yards from the cave mouth, and buried no fewer than ten men who were returning from drawing water from the ice-hole. Johnnie himself had a very narrow escape, and once again the poor lad was obsessed by the awful thought that he alone was the Jonah, and the cause of all these evils.

But sorrows seldom come singly, and one day the doctor entered the cave and sought out the captain.

"Bad news, sir," he said; "two men have died almost suddenly, and had better be got under at once."

"You surprise me, doctor. What is it?"

"The black death, sir. The polar plague! Alas!" he added ruefully, "we know now the disease those poor fellows whose bones we found in the corner died from. The bite of no poisonous snake in the world proves more speedily fatal than the poison of the polar plague."

It was now nearly the end of March, and black indeed was the outlook for even those who were not attacked. They felt sleepy, cold, and listless, and could hardly be comforted or roused to action. In less than

"THE GOOD SURGEON WAS BARELY IN TIME TO CLUTCH HIM AND DRAG HIM AWAY FROM THE CLIFF-EDGE" three weeks' time no fewer than twelve brave fellows had succumbed, and more than half the others were lying ill, and recovering but slowly. It is needless to say that the doctor, captain, and Mac the mate did their duty. All three had faced death before now in many a hideous form.

But it has to be recorded—for it is right to do so—that Johnnie proved himself one of the bravest nurses in this fearful emergency that ever stood beside a bed of death. And little Tim was a most excellent assistant. Johnnie had no fear, and Tim had none, and the former prayed night and day that the plague might be stayed.

As if in answer to these prayers, the sun shone brightly day after day now far into the recesses of the darksome cave that had been turned into a hospital, and the doctor assured the boy, much to his joy, that the virulence of the plague had at last abated.

He made both boys take far more sleep now than they had had for weeks, and sent them out daily to roam the hills with their two tame bears. So the lads' spirits rose considerably as the days went by.

A terrible storm now confined all hands to the cave for nearly a week. So blinding, indeed, was the ice-dust, so violent the wind, that it was found almost impossible to go from one opening to the other. But fifty times a day at least the doctor and our hero, Johnnie, had to do this journey. The doctor was rather proud of his little nurses than otherwise. Well, Johnnie himself was now very sturdy and strong, but Tim was quite a feather-weight, and during this great snow-blizzard he nearly met with a feather's fate. He was caught up in a gust of wind and carried for many yards in the direction of the cliff. The doctor saw him struggling on the very brink of destruction. In the white smother and whirl of the tempest the boy looked no larger than a snow-bunting, and the good surgeon was barely in time to clutch him and drag him away from the cliff-edge.

But after this, as long as the blizzard blew, Johnnie and his little mate never crossed from the living cave to the hospital one without being roped together, like a couple of mountaineers. Such storms as these away up in the icy north frequently bring fine weather. It happened so in this case. No more snow fell, and the glad sunshine brought joy and hope to every heart, even to the sick, who began to get stronger, though still unable to walk.

Now, every day, when Johnnie and his chum, with those two wise and splendid bears, went forth for a ramble, they took a telescope with them, and climbed the nearest hill, then turned the glass towards the blue-black ocean they could now just descry far away on the horizon beyond the pack.

Our hero hoped to discover from that hilltop some day signs of sealers on the ice, and to be the first to bring back such gladsome news to his captain and Mac the mate.

Whether the glass was not strong enough or whether the distance was far too great it is impossible to say, only they were disappointed. But one day the two bears left them, and hurried on before to the top of the hill; and when Johnnie and Tim got up, lo! the poor beasts were both standing on end sniffing the air.

Johnnie understood at once what this meant.

"Oh, Tim," he cried, "look, look! The bears are wiser far than we. They scent their game. There are men on the pack-edge that we cannot see even with the telescope, and they are busy sealing. We are saved, Tim, or we soon shall be!"

Now that great snowstorm had quite filled up every hollow between the bergs, so that the whole pack was now one vast plain of dazzling white, with ne'er a crevice.

Johnnie and his little chum hurried back to the great cave to tell what they had found out.

"By George, Johnnie," cried Mac the mate, excited, "you are a genius!"

"Not a genius," said Johnnie, "only just a Jonah, Mac."

If ever the North Pole shall be discovered by a party on sledges, these will be, nay, but must be, hauled by bears and not by dogs. Already a tribe of half-bred Esquimaux have been found who make use of these wise and splendid animals in their sledges. If obtained when very young, they grow up tame, gentle, and tractable. And Johnnie and Tim had already taught their pets to draw a sledge, and now the happy thought occurred to them to set forth across that trackless desert of ice and snow in search of help. It was a forlorn hope certainly, but afforded one last chance of escaping from their prison island, and so both the captain and the doctor were glad to grasp it.

So a larger, stronger sledge was constructed, capable of carrying not only four persons, but their sleeping sacks, arms and provisions. Several trial trips were first made, and everything seemed to work famously.

At length one fine morning Mac the mate, with the spectioneer, and Tim, with Johnnie, set forth upon their perilous journey.

Johnnie was very merry over it, and dubbed himself chauffeur. He had forgotten all about Jonah. They were started with rousing British cheers, even the sick crawling to the cave's mouth to wish them God-speed in their undertaking.

The bears seemed to know all about it too, and would have run far faster than Johnnie wished to drive them. But they did five-and-twenty miles the first day. Though Johnnie held the reins, whenever he was in the slightest doubt, and this was pretty often, he permitted the bears to judge of the direction. They simply held their heads aloft, sniffed the air for a moment, then literally followed their noses.

It was a little cold sleeping in bags, but both boys pulled these close up towards the bears, and felt not only safe but comfortable. They had not the slightest fear that their shaggy steeds would desert them. They seemed to love their young masters as much as a bear's nature can love, and that is a good deal more than most folks have any idea of.

The fine weather and glorious sunshine held, and the snow was crisp and hard, so day after day for nearly a whole week they went steadily on towards the east and the ink-black ocean, in which all hope was now entirely centred.

. . . . . .

Strange as it may appear, Von Brocken, skipper of the *Green Dutchman*, was possessed of a conscience. It was not, however, one of the good old sort that our great-grandfathers used to wear. Brocken's conscience was an easy-going, up-to-date concern, with pneumatic tyres, the best of ball bearings, and all the latest improvements. So it was not much trouble to the fat old boy.

Nevertheless it did the turn. For one day at breakfast when the *Green Dutchman* was headed for the north once more, he spoke to his mate.

"Mate," he said, "I hab plenty bad dream t'odder night. De *Melinka* not hab turn up. So as soon as ve vos make the ice and hab load up wid seal-oil and skin, ve go ober de ice to de island, and if any *Melinka* men alive, ve vos going to save dem. Dat vos right and proper. Suppose dey all dead, den all de easier for us. See?"

The mate saw, for whatever the skipper proposed he was sure to second.

It was the crew of the *Green Dutchman*, then, who were busy sealing when that wonderful sledge, hauled by the bears, was seen by the Dutchmen high on top of an enormous hummock.

The superstitious mariners were frightened half out of their wits, and were soon in full cry back towards the ship. But fleet-footed Tim was dispatched to overtake them, and came up with the lot just as they were clambering over the ship's side like a pack of hunted rats.

Tim speedily found his way below, and explained matters in full detail to the astonished skipper and his mate.

"Vell, leetle boy," said the former, "it vos all so very foony, dat I can hardly doomple to it. But ees it all true?"

Little Tim held up his right hand and said, "So help me Bob, sir," and everybody was obliged to believe so solemn a declaration as that.

Well, it is but fair to say that, having once determined to go to the assistance of those on the far-off desert isle, Von Brocken did things properly and well, and in two days' time an expedition was bearing up for the west that was a credit to the *Green Dutchman* and her crew.

The mate of the *Green Dutchman* went in command of the relief party, but Johnnie and Tim, with their two huge pets, the trained bears, remained behind, and very useful indeed both proved to be. The Dutchman was making every effort to fill up his ship with skins and blubber, and Johnnie's gun laid more seals dead in one day than any three of the foreign skirmishers. When the boy tired of shooting he had the big sledge loaded up with as many skins as could lie thereon, and although the ship was frozen in fully three miles from the sealing-ground, the bears did not take long to drag their cargo alongside. It was speedily discharged, and back they shambled for another. The pet bears, all the time they worked, were, it is needless to say, fed on the very fat of the land—well, call it blubber if you please.

Not only the skipper of the *Green Dutchman*, but every man on board of her, looked very anxious indeed when one day the clouds began to bank up in the east, and there was every appearance of a change of weather, and probably a terrible storm.

A low moaning wind blew off the sea, and ominous sounds came from the ice-pack itself. The expedition to the distant isle was one of infinite danger, for should a gale really come on, every one of those brave fellows, as well as the *Melinka's* men, whom they had gone to rescue, would, in all likelihood, perish.

No wonder, then, that the skipper was anxious.

But just as the waves beneath the snow-clad bergs began to heave up and down, the man in the crow's-nest suddenly hailed the deck.

"They are coming. They are coming. They are all in sight."

Then, oh, the glad shout that rose skywards from the deck of the *Green Dutchman*, and the skipper himself heaved a sigh of relief and hurried down below to his dinner and his gin.

. . . . . .

Johnnie, it is almost needless to say, took to the sea as a profession, and many a danger has he encountered, many a strange land has he seen. Ah! well, whatever is, is best, no doubt; and there are no better recruits for Army or Navy either than the sturdy boys who were bred to hold the plough.

AMUSING SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTS

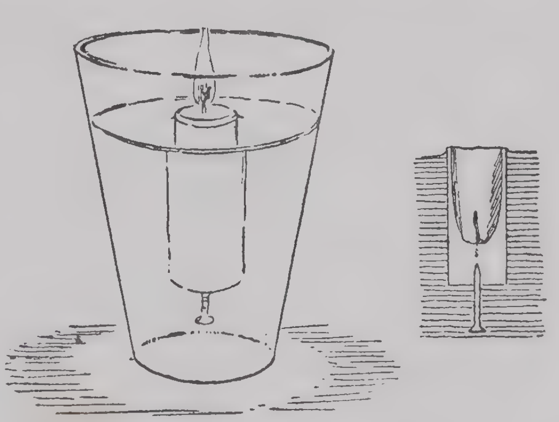
By R. KEITH JOHNSTON

In the scientific experiments described here we find various articles mentioned, such as egg-shells, pickle-bottles, etc. These are chosen because they are generally to be had for our purpose without buying them specially, but in many cases other things will do equally well, and we may even be able to find something better than what we are told to use. For instance, in the Diving-bell experiment a cheese-dish and a pickle-bottle or a block of wood with a hole in it are mentioned as parts of the necessary apparatus; but if we happen to have an aquarium of which we have grown tired, we could wish for no better water-tank for our experiments. If a spare accumulator-glass can be begged or borrowed, that also will do admirably, and needs no stand or support. Again, we are told to use a basin or saucer, but in many cases the bath will do just as well, if not better. In one experiment we are told to use an egg-shell with a straw stuck into it and made water-tight with sealing-wax. Now, an egg-shell will do admirably for the purpose, but it is certain to get broken—probably before we have finished preparing it, and it would be far better to take a tin box, such as those in which we buy slugs for the air-gun, and to solder a short length of tin or brass pipe into it. If the soldering presents difficulties, we may make the hole in the bottom of the tin large enough to take a small cork, through which we can fit the pipe. In this way we shall have a piece of apparatus which will not be broken so easily, and we can use it over and over again when we want to show our friends how the thing works. It is useful to be able to "make shift" with whatever is handy, but it is far better to think out the most suitable things, and to make apparatus that will last longer than just while we are trying an experiment for the first time. In the example quoted the lasting materials are probably just as easy to lay hands on as the egg-shell, and much easier to handle, though we must not grudge a little trouble—it is all good training for more important things later on.

A Liquid Candlestick

A glass of water—how can *that* be used for a candlestick ? In spite of its apparent absurdity, however, it can be made to serve the purpose.

If you try to stand a candle in water it will fall over, so you must give it weight at the foot by sticking a nail into it. You will have to try two or three nails before you get one which will keep the candle upright without dragging it down under the water; and it must be so heavy that the water comes up to the top of the candle without quite touching the wick.

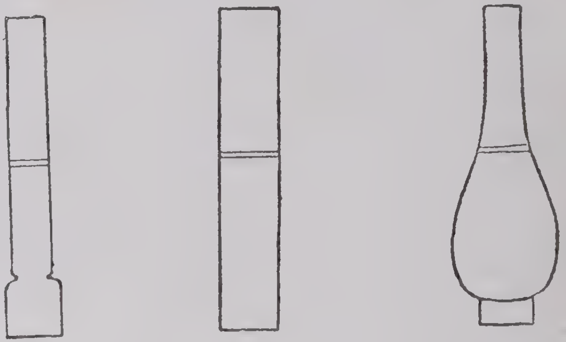


Now light the candle, and you will see that, in spite of its unfavourable surroundings, it will burn down to the end.

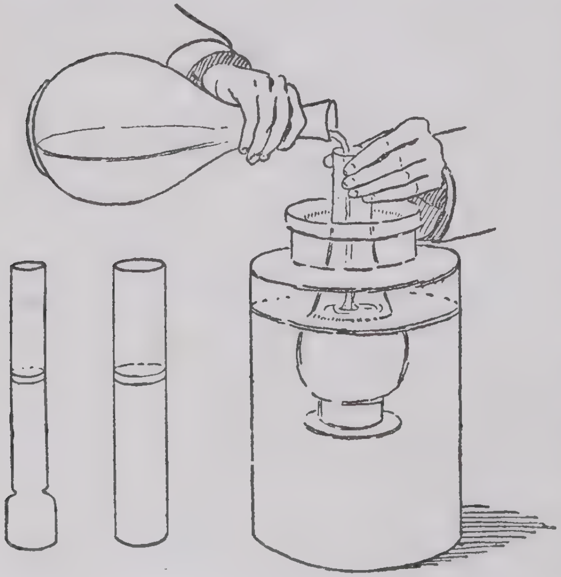
This seems at first sight extraordinary, but with a little thought we can find out the explanation of the experiment.

It is this : although the candle becomes shorter as it burns, and it seems as if the water must get at the wick, on the other hand the weight of the candle is reduced in proportion, and it rises little by little. Besides this, the greasy substance of the candle, chilled by the water, melts much more slowly at the circumference than in the centre, and you will see that the top of the candle becomes hollowed out more and more, so that the flame makes a little well for itself, like the one shown in the corner of our picture.

This experiment is not without a practical use. Contrary to what happens in the case of ordinary candlesticks, the flame of a candle used in this way gives a point of light which is always the same distance second a plain cylinder, the third a common lamp-glass with a big bulge on the lower part. All the glasses must be of nearly the same size at the bottom, and the card just big enough to close them. Paste a strip of paper marked in quarters of an inch up the side of the jar, and a narrow paper ring round each of the glasses at the same height from the bottom—say four inches.



Hold the card against the bottom of the narrowest glass and lower it into the jar until the paper ring touches the water. In doing so be careful to let no water get in between the card and the bottom of the lamp-chimney. This is quite easy if you hold the card in place with a loop of string which you can take away as soon as the card touches the water, when the pressure will hold the card up against the bottom of the glass.

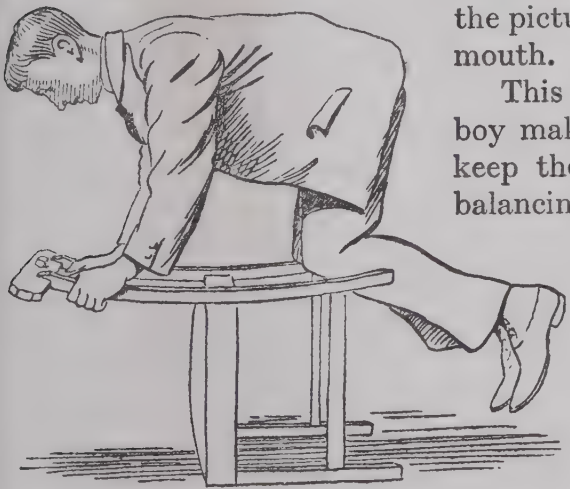


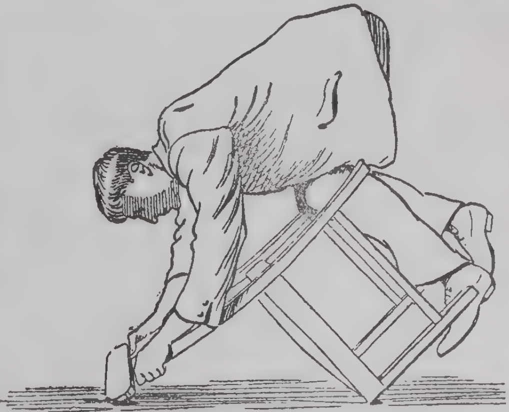
Now pour water into the lamp-glass, and when it is filled up to the level of the surrounding water in the jar, but not before, the card will be released, and will fall to the bottom. Measure the height of the water now in the jar, so as to find out how much water you have added, and try with the other glasses. Starting each time with the original quantity of water in the jar, you will find that with glass No. 2 you have to use a greater quantity of additional water before the card is released, and with No. 3 a still larger quantity. Each of the glasses is larger in diameter than the one tried before it, and drives the level of the surrounding water higher up in the jar. The base (the cardboard disc) is the same in each case, and you have seen that the card is not released until the level of the water inside the glasses is the same height as the water in the jar, which proves that it is not the weight of the added water which causes the card to fall, but that the pressure exerted by the water on the under surface of the card is equal to the weight of a column of water whose base is equal to the area of the card, and whose height is equal to the height of the water above it.

The Reward of Greed

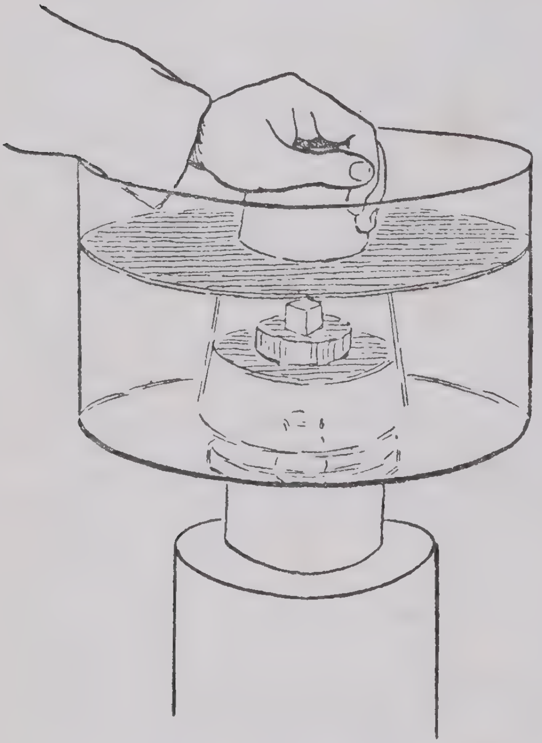
Lay a chair down with its front legs on the floor, and stand a lump of sugar on the back of the top rail. Now invite a friend to kneel on the bottom bar of the chair, as shown in the picture, and take up the sugar with his mouth.

This looks very simple, but unless the boy making the experiment is careful to keep the centre of gravity—that is, the balancing point—of his body behind the seat of the chair, it will inevitably tip up, and he will see the sugar, which he thought he was going to get, rolling away from him, and he will thus be able to realize the feelings of Tantalus when





it upright so as not to upset the cork, and hold the brim of the tumbler against the bottom of the tank as long as you wish. When you let the tumbler rise again the cork will rise with it and the sugar will be perfectly dry, for the pressure of the air in the tumbler will prevent the water from getting at it.



When a diving-bell is sunk to a great depth the natural pressure of the air, or atmospheric pressure (about 15 lbs. on each square inch), is not enough to keep the water out, but air must be forced into it under pressure, by means of an "air-compressor" or air-pump, the necessary amount of compression increasing with the depth.

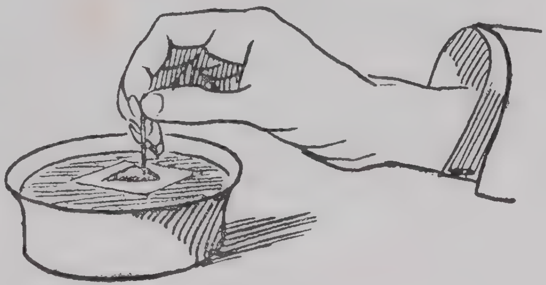
CENTRIPETAL FIGURES

On a small square of ordinary white paper draw any geometrical figure, such as a square, oblong, triangle, polygon, etc., using for the purpose a *wet* pencil, making good, thick lines.

Float the paper on water in a basin or saucer, the design on top, and cover the surface of the figure with water. This will need a little care, but it is easy enough if you use a fountain-pen filler—the wet pencil lines will prevent the water from escaping beyond the boundaries of the figure, and you will be able to get quite a thick cushion of water on the paper.

Now take a pin and put its point into the water-cushion at one of the corners of the figure, but not penetrating to the paper, and the square of paper will move quite rapidly until the centre of the design is exactly under the pin's point. Try it from any part of the outline of the drawing, and the result will be the same.

This is easily proved if you find the centre of the figure beforehand by making two diagonals on it, the point where they cross each other being the centre of the figure. Sometimes the paper gets up so much impetus that it will go past the centre, but it will return and stop in the right spot. You can use any figure, such as an outline of the map of England, in which case you may find out what town is nearest the centre of your own country.



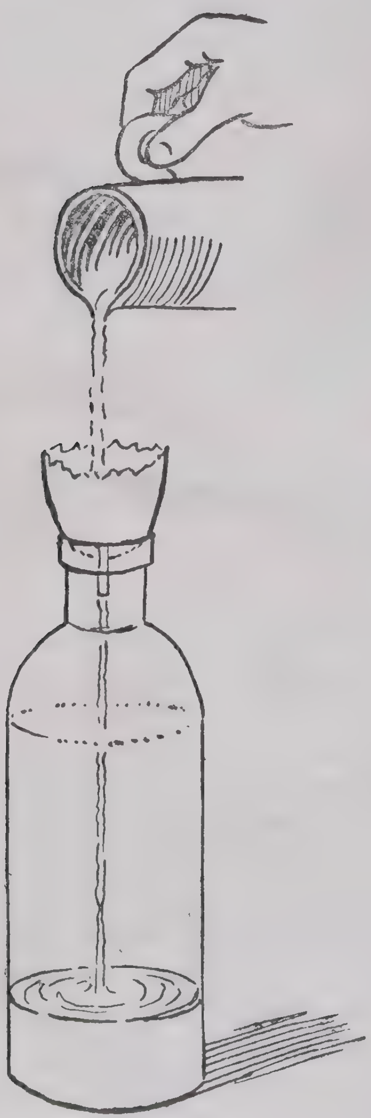
It is perhaps hardly fair not to explain the word "centripetal." It comes from the Latin *centrum*, the centre, and *peto*, I seek, so the title means centre-seeking figures.

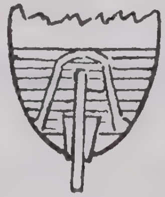
THE CUP OF TANTALUS

Take an egg-shell and cut off the top as you do at table, then make a hole in the bottom large enough to admit a small tube such as a wheat-straw, or a quill, or any small rigid tube.

You will also want an ordinary thimble, which must not have any holes in it. Push the tube into the shell so that it projects inside just a little less than the height of the thimble, so that the thimble will rest on the bottom of the egg without touching the top of the pipe, it does not matter how far the pipe projects outside the egg. Now rig up some sort of stand for the egg—a bottle with a good big mouth, but not big enough to let the egg through, will do very well; or you may get a big cork and stick three forks into it to make a tripod-stand, making a hole in the cork for the pipe to pass through, and stand a tumbler underneath. The joint between the pipe and the shell must be made water-tight with sealing-wax.

When your apparatus is ready, pour water into the shell, and if it is water-tight the water will remain in it until you get above the top of the pipe, when it will, of course, run down the pipe into the bottle or tumbler, but when you stop pouring the shell will be full up to the top of the pipe. Now empty it, and then put the thimble inside the shell over the pipe, and fill up with water again.





When the water covers the thimble you will see that the water begins to run out through the pipe, and it will continue to flow until the shell is quite empty!

This is known in physical laboratories as "The Cup of Tantalus." The explanation of the phenomenon is as follows: As the water is poured into the shell it gets under the thimble, driving the air in the thimble down the pipe, and when the water reaches the top of the pipe it is driven down it by the pressure of the air on the surface of the water in the shell. As there is no air under the thimble and above the top of the pipe, there is no balancing pressure of air from below, so the whole of the water is forced down the pipe; the action is, in fact, that of a syphon. A little study of the sketch in the corner, which shows a section of the apparatus, will help you to understand how it works. If the rim of the thimble makes an air-tight joint with the inside of the shell, the water will not be able to get under it, and the syphon will not work until you lift the thimble a little and let the water in.

WITH CLIVE AT GHERIA

By HERBERT STRANG

About five o'clock in the afternoon of a November day in the year 1755, when the sun was casting a romantic glow over the long straggling settlement, a native vessel ran into Bombay harbour and dropped anchor. Scarcely had she done so when the superintendent of marine put off in a toni.

“ What grab is that ? ” he shouted in Urdu, as he came alongside.

“ The *Tremukji*, sir,” replied a voice in English.

“ Eh ! what ! who in the name of Jupiter are you ? ”

“ You'd better come aboard, sir, and I'll explain.”

The superintendent mounted the side, rapping out sundry exclam
tions of astonishment that amused the Englishman not a little. and
“ Don't talk like a native ! H'm ! Queer ! Turn him insi
No nonsense ! ” ne super-
“ Well, here I am,” he added, stepping on board. “ Me, while a
Johnson, and I'm superintendent of marine. Now then, es and chin
nonsense ! ” thes in one
“ My name is Desmond Burke, sir, and I've run away fı
in this grab.” k.”

“The deuce you have!”

“Yes, sir. I've been a prisoner there for six months and more, and we got off a few nights ago in the darkness.”

“H'm! Any more Irishmen aboard?”

“Not that I'm aware of, sir.”

“And you got away from Gheria, did you? You're the first that ever I heard did so. Nothing to do with Commodore James, eh?”

“No, sir. I don't know what you mean.”

“Why, Commodore James started t'other day to take a good sea-look at Gheria. There's an expedition getting ready to draw that rascally Pirate's teeth. You saw nothing of the squadron? No nonsense, now.”

“Not a thing, sir. We were blown out to sea, and I suppose the Commodore passed us in the night.”

“H'm! Very likely. And you weathered that storm, did you? Learnt your seamanship, eh?”

“Picked up a little on board the *Good Intent*, sir. I was ship's boy aboard.”

“Mighty queer ship's boy!” said Mr. Johnson in an audible aside. “The *Good Intent*'s a villainous interloper; how came you aboard of her?”

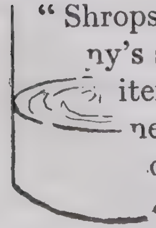
“I was in a sense tricked into it, sir, and when we got to Gheria Captain Barker and Mr. Diggle the supercargo sold me to Angria.”

“Sold you to the Pirate?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And where do you hail from, then?”

“Shropshire, sir; my father was Captain Richard Burke, in the ny's service.”



iter! You're Dick Burke's son! Gad, sir, give me your new Dick Burke; many's the sneaker of Bombay punch we've ogether. No nonsense about Dick; give me your fist. And ked out of Gheria and sailed this grab, eh? Well, you're he old block, and a credit to your old dad. I want to out this. And you'll have to come ashore and see the

stand how
the inside
syphon wil

"It's very kind of you, Mr. Johnson, but really I can't appear before the Governor in this rig."

He glanced ruefully at his bare legs and feet and tattered garments.

"True, you en't very ship-shape, but we'll soon alter that. Ever use a razor?"

"Not yet, sir," replied Desmond with a smile.

"Thought not. Plenty of native barbers. You must get shaved. And I'll rig you up in a suit of some sort. You must see the Governor at once, and no nonsense."

"What about the grab, sir?"

"Leave that to me. You've got a pretty mixed crew, I see. All escaped prisoners, too?"

"All but four."

"And not one of 'em to be trusted, I'll swear. Well, I'll put a crew aboard to take charge. Come along; there's no time to lose. Colonel Clive goes to bed early."

"Colonel Clive! Is he here?"

"Yes; arrived from home two days ago. Ah! that reminds me; you're a Shropshire lad; so's he; do you know him?"

"No, sir; I've seen him."

"Well," said the superintendent, "you'll see him again. Come along."

Desmond accompanied Mr. Johnson on shore. A crowd had gathered. There were sepoys in turban, cabay,[1] and baggy drawers; bearded Arabs; Parsis in their square brimless hats; and a various assortment of habitués of the shore—crimps, landsharks, badmashes,[2] bunder[3] gangs. Seeing Desmond hold his nose at the all-prevailing stench of fish Mr. Johnson laughed.

"You'll soon get used to that," he said. "'Tis all fish-oil and bummaloes[4] in Bombay."

Having sent a trustworthy crew on board the *Tremukji*, the superintendent led Desmond to his house near the docks. Here, while a native barber plied his dexterous razor on Desmond's cheeks and chin Mr. Johnson searched through a miscellaneous hoard of clothes in one of his capacious presses for an outfit. He found garments that proved a reasonable fit, and Desmond, while dressing, gave a rapid sketch of his adventures since he left the prison-shed in Gheria.

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[1] Cloak. [2] Rowdy characters. [3] Port.

[4] Small fish the size of smelt, known when dried as "Bombay duck."

"My wigs, but you've had a time of it. Mutiny and all! Dash my buttons, here's a tale for the ladies! Let me look at you. Yes, you'll do now, and faith you're a pretty fellow. And Dick Burke's son! You've got his nose to a T; no nonsense about that. Now you're ready to make your bow to Mr. Bourchier. He's been a coursing match with Colonel Clive and Mr. Watson up Malabar Hill, and we'll catch him before he sits down to supper. How do you feel inside, by the way? Ready for a decent meal after the Pirate's hog's wash, eh?"

"I'm quite comfortable inside," said Desmond, smiling, "but, to tell you the truth, Mr. Johnson, I feel mighty uneasy outside. After six months of the dhoti these breeches and things seem just like bandages."

"It en't the first time you've been swaddled, if you had a mother. Well now, if you're ready. What! That rascal gashed you? Tuts! 'tis a scratch. Can't wait to doctor that. Come on."

The two made their way into the fort enclosure, and walked rapidly to Government House in the centre. In answer to Mr. Johnson the darwan[1] at the door said that the Governor would not return that night. After the coursing match he was giving a supper party at his country house at Parel.

"That's a nuisance. But we can't have any nonsense. The Governor's a bit of an autocrat; too much starch in his shirt, I say; but we'll go out to Parel and beard him, by Jove! 'Tis only five miles out, and we'll drive there in under an hour."

Turning away he hurried out past the tank-house on to the Green, and by good luck found an empty shigram[2] waiting to be hired. Desmond mounted the vehicle with no little curiosity. These great beasts with their strange humps would surely not cover five miles in less than an hour. But he was undeceived when they started. The two sturdy oxen trotted along at a good pace in obedience to the driver's goad, and the shigram rattled across Bombay Green, past the church and the whitewashed houses of the English merchants, their oyster-shell windows already lit up; and in some forty-five minutes entered a long avenue leading to Mr. Bourchier's country house.

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[1] Doorkeeper.

[2] Carriage like a palanquin on wheels.

Since their departure from the fort the sky had become quite dark. At the end of the avenue they could see the lights of Governor Bourchier's bungalow, and by and by caught sight of figures sitting on the veranda. Desmond's heart beat high; he made no doubt that one of them was Clive; the moment to which he had looked forward so eagerly was at last at hand. He was in no dreamland; his dream had come true. He felt a little nervous at the prospect of meeting men so famous, so immeasurably above him, as Clive and Admiral Watson; but with Clive he felt a bond of union in his birthplace, and it was with recovered confidence that he sprang out of the cart and accompanied Mr. Johnson to the bungalow. He was further reassured by a jolly laugh that rang out just as he reached the steps leading up to the veranda.

"Hallo, Johnson!" said a voice, "what does this mean?"

"I've come to see the Governor, Captain."

"Then you couldn't have come at a worse time. The supper's half-an-hour late, and you know what that means to the Governor."

Mr. Johnson smiled.

"He'll forget his supper when he has heard my news. 'Tis about the Pirate."

"What's that?" said another voice. "News of the Pirate?"

"Yes, Mr. Watson. This young gentleman——"

But he was interrupted by the khansaman,[1] who came out at this moment and with a salaam announced that supper was served.

"You'd better come in, Johnson," said the first speaker. "Any news of the Pirate will be sauce to Mr. Bourchier's goose."

The gentlemen rose from their seats, and went into the house, followed by Desmond and the superintendent. In a moment Desmond found himself in a large room brilliantly lighted with candles. In the centre was a round table, and Mr. Bourchier, the Governor, was placing his guests. He did not look very pleasant, and when he saw Mr. Johnson he said:

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[1] Butler.

"You come at a somewhat unseasonable hour, sir. Cannot your business wait till the morning?"

"I made bold to come, your Excellency, because 'tis a piece of news the like of which no one in Bombay has ever heard before. This young gentleman, Mr. Desmond Burke, son of Captain Burke, whom you'll remember, sir, has escaped from Gheria."

The Governor and his guests were by this time seated, and instantly all eyes were focussed on Desmond, and exclamations of astonishment broke from their lips.

"Indeed! Bring chairs, Hossain."

One of the native attendants left the room noiselessly, and returning with chairs placed them at the table.

"Sit down, gentlemen. That is amazing news, as you say, Mr. Johnson. Perhaps Mr. Burke will relate his adventure as we eat."

Desmond took the chair set for him. The guests were five. Two of them wore the laced coats of admirals; the taller, a man of handsome presence, with a round chubby face, large eyes, small full lips, his head crowned by a neat curled wig, was Charles Watson, in command of the British fleet; the other was his second, Rear-Admiral Pocock. A third was Richard King, captain of an Indiaman, in a blue coat with velvet lappets and gold embroidery, buff waistcoat and breeches. Next him sat a jolly red-faced gentleman in plain attire, and between him and the Governor was Clive himself, whose striking face—the lawyer's brow, the warrior's nose and chin, the dreamer's mouth—would have marked him out in any company.

Desmond began his story. The barefooted attendants moved quietly about with the dishes, but the food was almost neglected as the six gentlemen listened to the clear, low voice telling of the escape from the fort, the capture of the grab, and the eventful voyage to Bombay harbour.

"By George! 'tis a famous adventure," exclaimed Admiral Watson, when the story was ended. "What about this Pirate's den? Gheria fort is said to be impregnable; what are the chances if we attack, eh? The approaches to the harbour, now; do you know the depth of water?"

"Vessels can stand in to three fathoms water, sir. Seven fathoms is within point-blank shot of the fort. The walls are about fifty feet high; there are twenty-seven bastions, and they mount more than two hundred guns."

"And the opposite shore?"

"A flat tableland, within distance for bombarding. A diversion might be made from there while the principal attack could be carried on in the harbour, or from a hill south of the fort."

"Is the landing easy?"

"Yes, sir. There are three sandy bays under the hill, without any surf to make landing difficult. One is out of the line of fire from the fort."

"And what about the land side? There's a town, is there not?"

"On a neck of land, sir. There's a wall, but nothing to keep out a considerable force. If an attack were made from that side the people would, I think, flock into the fort."

"And is that as strong as rumour says?"

"'Tis pretty strong, sir; there are double walls, and thick ones; they'd stand a good battering."

"It seems to me, Admiral," said the red-faced gentleman, with a laugh, "that you've learnt all you sent Commodore James to find out. What do you say, Mr. Clive?"

"It seems so, Mr. Merriman. But I think, Mr. Watson, in our eagerness to learn something of Gheria, we must seem somewhat cavalier to this lad, whose interest in our plans cannot be equal to our own. You have shown, sir," he added, addressing Desmond, "great spirit and courage, not less ingenuity, in your daring escape from the Pirate. But I want to go farther back. How came you to fall into the Pirate's hands? You have told us only part of your story."

"Yes, indeed," said Mr. Bourchier. "If you are not tired, we shall be vastly pleased to hear more, Mr. Burke."

"Your name is Burke?" interrupted Clive. "I had not before caught it. May I ask what part of Ireland you come from, sir? Pardon me, but your accent smacks more of Shropshire than of County Dublin."

"'Tis Shropshire, sir; I come from Market Drayton." ("Like yourself!" his glowing cheeks and flashing eyes seemed to say. This was the proudest moment in Desmond's life as yet.)

"I was not mistaken," said Clive. "I remember a schoolfellow of mine of your name; let me see——"

"Richard Burke, sir, my brother; my father was Captain Burke, in the Company's service."

"Sure I have it now. I remember him: a tall, fine old sea-dog whom I saw at times in Market Drayton when I was a child. I had a great awe of Captain Burke—i' faith, the only man I was afraid of. And you are his son!—But come, I am interrupting your story."

Desmond spoke of his longing for adventure, which had led him to leave home in search of fortune. He told how he had been inveigled on board the *Good Intent*, and handed over to Angria when the vessel arrived at Gheria. He mentioned no names except that of Captain Barker of the *Good Intent*.

"Barker is a villain, ripe for the gallows," said Captain King. "But, Mr. Burke, I don't understand how you came to be so hoodwinked in London. Sure you must have known that a boy without an ounce of experience would never be made supercargo. Had you any enemies in London?"

"I didn't know I had, sir, till the *Good Intent* had sailed. I was deceived, but the man who promised me the berth was very friendly, and I didn't suspect him."

"It was not Barker, then?"

"No, sir; it was a man I met at Market Drayton."

"At Market Drayton?" said Clive. "That's odd. What was his name?"

"His name was Diggle, and——"

"A stranger? I remember no one of that name," said Clive.

"I thought he was a stranger, sir; but of late I have begun to suspect he was not such a stranger as he seemed."

"How did you meet him?"

"Accidentally, sir, the night of your banquet in Market Drayton."

"Indeed! 'Tis all vastly curious. Was he lodging in the town?"

"He came in from Chester that night and lodged at the *Four Alls*."

"Did he tell you anything about himself ?"

"Very little, sir, except that he'd been unlucky. I think he mentioned once that he was a fellow at a Cambridge college, but he spoke to me most about India."

As he put his questions Clive leant forward, and seemed to become more keenly interested with every answer. He now turned and gave a hard look at the bluff man whom he had called Mr. Merriman. The rest of the company were silent.

"Well," said Clive, "you are lucky, let me tell you, Mr. Burke, to be out of this Diggle's clutches. By the way, have you seen him since he sold you to the Pirate ?"

"He came a few days before I escaped, and wanted me to come here as a spy. Angria promised me my freedom and a large sum of money."

"What's that ?" cried Merriman. "Wanted you to come as a spy ?"

"Yes, sir."

"And what did you say ?"

"I told him he might do it himself."

"A palpable hit !" said Merriman with a grim laugh, "and a very proper answer. But he'll have more respect for his skin."

"Gentlemen," put in Mr. Bourchier, "we have kept Mr. Burke talking so much that he hasn't had a mouthful of food. I think we might go out on the veranda and smoke our cheroots while he takes some supper. Mr. Johnson, you've done most justice to my viands, I think. Perhaps you will join us."

The superintendent became purple in the face. He had in fact been eating and drinking with great gusto, taking advantage of the preoccupation of the company to ensure that the excellent fare should not be wasted. He rose hurriedly, and, with a sheepish look that scarcely fitted his cheerful features, followed his sarcastic host to the veranda. All the guests save Mr. Merriman accompanied Mr. Bourchier.

"They all want to talk shop—this expedition against the Pirate," said Mr. Merriman. "You and I can have a little chat."

Desmond was attracted by the open face of his new acquaintance, slightly disfigured, as he noticed, by a long scar on the left temple.

For some time they sat discussing the possibilities of a successful attack upon Gheria; and then Mr. Merriman suddenly said: "Tell me, what are your ideas? What are you going to do now that you are a free man once more? Get another berth as supercargo?"

His eyes twinkled as he said this.

"No thank you, sir; once bit twice shy. I haven't really thought of anything definite, but what I should like best of all would be a cadetship under Colonel Clive."

"Soho! You're a fighter, are you? But of course you are; I have reason to know that. Well, we'll see what my friend Mr. Clive says. You've no money, I suppose?"

"Not a halfpenny, sir; but if the Governor will admit that the grab is my lawful prize, I thought of selling her; that will bring me a few pounds."

"Capital idea. Punctilio won't stand in the way of that, I should think. Well now, I'll speak to Mr. Clive for you, but don't build too much on it. He cannot give you a commission, I fear, without the authority of the Governor of Madras; and though no doubt a word from him would be effectual, he's a very particular man, and you'll have to prove you're fit for a soldier's life. Meanwhile, what do you say to this? I've taken a fancy to you. I'm a merchant; trade pays better than soldiering, in general. I've got ships of my own, and I dare say I could find a berth for you on one of them. You seem to know something of navigation?"

"Very little, sir; just what I picked up on the *Good Intent*."

"Well, that's a beginning. I've no doubt that Admiral Watson will wish you to go to Gheria with him: your knowledge of the place will be useful. He won't start for a month or two: why not occupy the time in improving your navigation, so that if there are difficulties about a cadetship you'll be competent for a mate's berth? Nothing like having two strings to your bow. What do you say to that?"

"'Tis very good of you, sir; I accept with pleasure."

"That's right. Now when you've finished that curry we'll go out on the veranda. Before you came they were talking of nothing but their dogs; but I wager 'tis nothing but the Pirate now."

Early next day Admiral Watson himself rode down to the harbour to inspect the grab. He was so much pleased with her that he offered to buy her for the service. Before the day was out Desmond found himself in possession of seven thousand rupees. After paying his Maratha crew the wages agreed upon, he proceeded to divide the balance. He retained two shares for himself, and gave each of the men who had escaped with him an equal part.

Time sped quickly. Desmond made the best use of his opportunities of learning navigation under Captain King and the superintendent, and before two months had expired was pronounced fit to act as mate on the finest East Indiaman afloat. He took this with a grain of salt. The fact was that his adventures, the modesty with which he deprecated all allusions to his part in the escape from Gheria, and the industry with which he worked, won him the goodwill of all; he was a general favourite with the little European community of Bombay.

One thing disappointed him. Not once during the two months did he come in contact with Clive. Mr. Merriman remained in Bombay, awaiting the arrival of a vessel of his from Muscat; but Desmond was loath to ask him whether he had sounded Clive about a cadetship. As a matter of fact Mr. Merriman had mentioned the matter at once.

"Patience, Merriman," was Clive's reply. "I have my eye on the youngster."

And with that the merchant, knowing his friend, was very well content; but he kept his own counsel.

At length, one day in the first week of February 1756, Desmond received a summons to visit the Admiral. His interview was brief. He was directed to place himself under the orders of Captain Latham on the *Tyger;* the fleet was about to sail.

It was a bright, cool February morning, cool, that is, for Bombay, when the vessels weighed anchor and sailed slowly out of the harbour. All Bombay lined the shores: natives of every hue and every mode of attire; English merchants; ladies, fluttering white handkerchiefs. Such an expedition had never been undertaken against the noted Pirate before, and the report of Commodore James, confirming the information brought by Desmond, had given the authorities good hope that this pest of the Malabar coast was at last to be destroyed.

It was an inspiriting sight as the vessels, rounding the point, made under full sail to the south. There were six line-of-battle ships, six Company's vessels, five bomb-ketches, four Maratha grabs—one of them Angria's own grab, the *Tremukji*, on which Desmond had escaped—and forty gallivats. The *Tyger* led the van. Admiral Watson's flag was hoisted on the *Kent*, Admiral Pocock's on the *Cumberland*. On board the fleet were 200 European soldiers, 300 sepoys, and 300 Topasses—mainly half-caste Portuguese in the service of the Company, owing their name to the topi[1] they wore. To co-operate with this force a land army of 12,000 Marathas, horse and foot, under the command of Ramaji Punt, one of the Peshwa's generals, had been for some time investing the town of Gheria.

At this time of the year the winds were so slight and variable that it was nearly a week before the fleet arrived off Gheria. When the bastions of the fort hove into sight Desmond could not help contrasting his feelings with those of two months before.

" Like the look of your cage, Mr. Burke ? " said Captain Latham at his elbow.

" I was just thinking of it, sir," said Desmond. " It makes a very great difference when you're outside the bars."

" And we'll break those bars before we're much older, or I'm a Dutchman."

At this moment the signal to heave-to was seen flying at the mast-head of the *Kent*. Before the vessels had anchored one of the grabs left the main fleet and ran into the harbour. It bore a message from Admiral Watson to Tulaji Angria, summoning him to surrender. The answer returned was that if the Admiral desired to be master of the fort he must take it by force, as Angria was resolved to defend it to the last extremity. The ships remained at anchor outside the harbour during the night. Next morning a boat put off from the town end of the fort conveying several of Angria's relatives and some officers of Ramaji Punt's army. It by and by became known that Tulaji Angria, leaving

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[1] Hat.

his brother in charge of the fort, had given himself up to Ramaji Punt, and was now a prisoner in his camp. The visitors had come ostensibly to view the squadron, but really to discover what were Admiral Watson's intentions in regard to the disposal of the fort supposing it fell into his hands. The Admiral saw through the device, which was no doubt to hand the fort over to the Peshwa's general, and so baulk the British of their legitimate prize. Admiral Watson made short work of the visitors. He told them that if Angria would surrender his fort peaceably he and his family would be protected; but that the fort he must have. They pleaded for a few days' grace, but the Admiral declined to wait a single day. If the fort was not immediately given up he would sail in and attack it.

It was evident that hostilities could not be avoided. About one in the afternoon Captain Henry Smith of the *Kingfisher* sloop was ordered to lead the way, and Desmond was sent to join him.

"What is the depth under the walls, Mr. Burke?" the Captain asked him.

"Three and a half fathoms, sir—deep enough to float the biggest of us."

The sloop weighed anchor, and stood in before the afternoon breeze. It was an imposing sight as the fleet formed in two divisions and came slowly in their wake. Each ship covered a bomb-ketch, protecting the smaller vessels from the enemy's fire. Desmond himself was kept very busy, going from ship to ship as ordered by signals from the *Kent*, and assisting each captain in turn to navigate the unfamiliar harbour.

It was just two o'clock when the engagement began with a shot from the fort at the *Kingfisher*. The shot was returned, and a quarter of an hour later, while the fleet was still under full sail, the *Kent* flew the signal for a general action. One by one the vessels anchored at various points opposite the fortifications, and soon a hundred and fifty guns were blazing away at the massive bastions and curtains, answered vigorously by Angria's two hundred and fifty. Desmond was all excitement. The deafening roar of the guns, the huge columns of smoke that floated heavily over the fort, and sometimes enveloped the vessels, the bray of trumpets, the beating of tom-toms, the shouts of men, set his blood tingling: and though he afterwards witnessed other stirring scenes, he never forgot the vivid impression of the fight at Gheria.

About three o'clock a shell set fire to one of the Pirate's grabs—one that had formerly been taken by him from the Company. Leaving its moorings, it drifted among the main fleet of pirate grabs which still lay lashed together where Desmond had last seen them. They were soon alight. The fire rapidly spread to the dockyard, caught the unfinished grabs on the stocks, and before long the whole of Angria's shipping was a mass of flame.

Meanwhile the bombardment had made little impression on the fortifications, and it appeared to the Admiral that time was being wasted. Accordingly he gave orders to elevate the guns and fire over the walls into the interior of the fort. A shell from one of the bomb-ketches fell plump into one of the outhouses of the palace and set it on fire. Fanned by the west wind, the flames spread to the arsenal and the storehouse licking up the sheds and smaller buildings until they reached the outskirts of the city. The crackling of flames was now mingled with the din of artillery, and as dusk drew on, the sky was lit up over a large space with the red glow of burning. By half-past six the guns on the bastions had been silenced, and the Admiral gave the signal to cease fire.

Some time before this a message reached Captain Smith ordering him to send Desmond at once on board the *Kent.* When he stepped on deck he found Admiral Watson in consultation with Clive. It appeared that during the afternoon a cloud of horsemen had been observed hovering on a hill eastward of the city; and being by no means sure of the loyalty of the Maratha allies, Clive had come to the conclusion that it was time to land his troops. But it was important that the shore and the neck of land east of the fort should be reconnoitred before the landing was attempted. The groves might, for all he knew, be occupied by the Pirate's troops or by those of Ramaji Punt, and Clive had had enough experience of native treachery to be well on his guard.

"I am going to send you on a somewhat delicate mission, Mr. Burke," he said. "You know the ground. I want you to go quietly on shore and see first of all whether there is safe landing for us, and then whether the ground between the town and the fort is occupied. Be quick and secret; I need waste no words. Mr. Watson has a boat's crew ready."

"I think, sir," said Desmond, "that it will hardly be necessary, perhaps not advisable, to take a boat's crew from this ship. If I might have a couple of natives there would be a good deal less risk in getting ashore."

"Certainly. But there is no time to spare; indeed, if you are not back in a couple of hours I shall land at once. But I should like to know what we have to expect. You had better get a couple of men from the nearest grab."

"The *Tremukji* is only a few cables' lengths away, sir, and there's a man on board who knows the harbour. I will take him, with your permission."

"Very well. Good luck go with you."

Desmond saluted, and stepping into the boat which had rowed him to the *Kent*, he was quickly conveyed to the grab. In a few minutes he left this in a skiff, accompanied only by Fuzl Khan, one of the men who had escaped with him, and a lascar. Not till then did he explain what he required of them. The Gujarati seemed overcome by the selection of himself for this mission.

"You are kind to me, sahib," he said. "I do not deserve it; but I will serve you to my life's end."

There was in the man's tone a fervency which touched Desmond at the time, and which he had good cause afterwards to remember.

A quarter of an hour after Desmond quitted the deck of the *Kent*, he was put ashore at a sandy bay at the further extremity of the isthmus, hidden from the fort by a small clump of mango trees.

"Now, Fuzl Khan," he said, "you will wait here for a few minutes till it is quite dark, then you will row quickly along the shore till you come to within a short distance of the jetty. I am going across the sand up toward the fort, and will come round to you."

He stepped over the soft sand towards the trees and was lost to sight. The bombardment had now ceased, and though he heard a confused noise from the direction of the fort, there was no sound from the town, and he concluded that the people had fled either into the fort or away into the country. It appeared at present that the whole stretch of land between the town and the fort was deserted.

He had not walked far when he was startled by hearing, as he fancied, a stealthy footstep following him. Gripping in his right hand the pistol he had brought as a precaution, and with the left loosening his sword in its scabbard, he faced round with his back to the wall of a shed in which Angria's ropes were made, and waited, listening intently. But the sound, slight as it was, had ceased. Possibly it had been made by some animal, though that seemed scarcely likely: the noise and the glare from the burning buildings must surely have scared away all the animals in the neighbourhood. Finding that the sound was not repeated, he went on again. Some minutes later, his ears on the stretch, he fancied he caught the same soft furtive tread: but when he stopped and listened and heard nothing, he believed that he must have been mistaken, and set it down as an echo of his own excitement.

Stepping warily, he picked his way through the darkness, faintly illumined by the distant glow of the conflagration. He skirted the dockyard, and drew nearer to the walls of the courtyard surrounding the fort, remembering how, nearly twelve months before, he had come almost the same way from the jetty. Then he had been a source of amusement to crowds of natives as he passed on his way to the palace; now the spot was deserted, and but for the noises that reached him from distant quarters he might have thought himself the sole living creature in that once populous settlement.

He had now reached the outer wall, which was separated from the fort only by a wide compound dotted here and there with palm-trees. It was clear that no force, whether of the Pirate's men or of Ramaji Punt's, held the ground between the shore and the fort. All the fighting men had without doubt been withdrawn within the walls. His mission was accomplished.

It had been his intention to make his way back by a shorter cut along the outer wall, by the west side of the dockyard, until he reached the shore near the jetty. But standing for a moment under the shade of a palm-tree, he hesitated to carry out his plan, for the path he meant to follow must be lit up along its whole course by a double glare: from the blazing buildings inside the fort, and from the burning gallivats in the dockyard and harbour. He was on the point of retracing his steps when, looking over the low wall towards the fort, he saw two dark figures approaching, moving swiftly from tree to tree, as if wishing to escape observation. It was too late to move now; if he left the shelter of the palm-tree he would come distinctly into view of the two men, and it would be unwise to risk anything that would delay his return to Clive. Accordingly he kept well in the shadow and waited. The stealthy movements of the men suggested that they were fugitives, eager to get away with whole skins before the fort was stormed.

They came to the last of the palm-trees within the wall, and paused there for a brief space. A few yards of open ground separated them from the gate. Desmond watched curiously, then with some anxiety, for it suddenly struck him that the men were making for him, and that he had actually been shadowed from his landing-place by some one acting, strange as it seemed, in collusion with them. On all accounts it was necessary to keep close.

Suddenly he saw the men leave the shelter of their tree and run rapidly across the ground to the gate. Having reached it, they turned aside into the shadow of the wall and stood as if to recover breath. Desmond had kept his eyes upon them all the time. Previously, in the shade of the trees, their faces had not been clearly distinguishable; but while now invisible from the fort, they were lit up by the glow from the harbour. It was with a shock of surprise that he recognized in the fugitives the overseer of the dockyard, whose cruelties he had so good reason to remember, and Marmaduke Diggle. The sight of the latter set his nerves tingling; his fingers itched to take some toll for the miseries he had endured through Diggle's villainy. But he checked his impulse to rush forward and confront the man. Single-handed he could not cope with both the fugitives; and though, if he had been free, he might have cast all prudence from him in his longing to bring the man to book, he recollected his duty to Clive and remained in silent rage beneath the tree.

All at once he heard a rustle behind him, a low growl like that of an animal enraged; and almost before he was aware of what was happening a dark figure sprang past him, leapt over the ground with the rapidity of a panther, and threw himself upon the overseer just as with Diggle he was beginning to move towards the town. There was a cry from each man, and the red light falling upon the face of the assailant, Desmond saw with amazement that it was Fuzl Khan, whom he had supposed to be rowing along the shore to meet him. He had hardly recognized the man before he saw that he was at deadly grips with the overseer, both snarling like wild beasts. There was no time for thought, for Diggle, momentarily taken aback by the sudden onslaught, had recovered himself and was making with drawn sword towards the two combatants, who in their struggle had moved away from him.

Desmond no longer stayed to weigh possibilities or count risks. It was clear that Fuzl Khan's first onslaught had failed; had he got home, the overseer, powerful as he was, must have been killed on the spot. In the darkness the Gujarati's knife had probably missed its aim. He had now two enemies to deal with, and but for intervention he must soon be overcome and slain. Drawing his sword, Desmond sprang from the tree and dashed across the open, reaching the scene of the struggle just in the nick of time to strike up Diggle's weapon ere it sheathed itself in the Gujarati's side. Diggle turned with a startled oath, and seeing who his assailant was, he left his companion to take care of himself and faced Desmond, a smile of anticipated triumph wreathing his lips.

No word was spoken. Diggle lunged, and Desmond at that moment knew that he was at a perilous crisis of his life. The movements of the practised swordsman could not be mistaken; he himself had little experience; all that he could rely on was his quick eye and the toughness of his muscles. He gave back, parrying the lunge, tempted to use his pistol upon his adversary. But now that the cannonading had ceased, a shot might be heard by some of the Pirate's men, and before he could escape he might be beset by a crowd of ruffians against whom he would have no chance at all. He could but defend himself with his sword and hope that Diggle might overreach himself in his fury and give him an opportunity to get home a blow.

Steel struck upon steel; the sparks flew; and the evil smile upon Diggle's face became fixed as he saw that Desmond was no match for him in swordsmanship. But it changed when he found that though his young opponent's science was at fault, his strength and dexterity, his wariness in avoiding a close attack, served him in good stead. Impatient to finish the fight, he took a step forward, and lunged so rapidly that Desmond could hardly have escaped his blade but for an accident. There was a choking sob to his right, and just as Diggle's sword was flashing towards him a heavy form fell against the blade and upon Desmond. In the course of their deadly struggle the Gujarati and the overseer had shifted their ground, and at this moment, fortunately for Desmond, Fuzl Khan had driven his knife into his old oppressor's heart.

But the same accident that saved Desmond's life gave Diggle an opportunity of which he was quick to avail himself. Before Desmond could recover his footing, Diggle shortened his arm and was about to drive his sword through the lad's heart. The Gujarati saw the movement. Springing in with uplifted knife he attempted to turn the blade. He succeeded; he struck it upwards, but the force with which he had thrown himself between the two swordsmen was his undoing. Unable to check his rush, he received the point of Diggle's sword in his throat. With a terrible cry he raised his hands to clutch his assailant; but his strength failed him; he swayed, tottered, and fell gasping at Desmond's feet, beside the lifeless overseer. Desmond saw that the turn of fortune had given the opportunity to him. He sprang forward as Diggle tried to recover his sword; Diggle gave way: and before he could lift his dripping weapon to parry the stroke, Desmond's blade was through his forearm. Panting with rage he sought with his left hand to draw his pistol; but Desmond was beforehand with him. He caught his arm, wrenched the pistol from him, and, breathless with his exertions, said:

"You are my prisoner."

"'Tis fate, my young friend," said Diggle, with all his old blandness; Desmond never ceased to be amazed at the self-command of this extraordinary man. "I have let some blood, I perceive; my sword-arm is for the time disabled; but my great regret at this moment—you will understand the feeling—is that this gallant friend of yours lies low with the wound intended for another. So Antores received in his flank the lance hurled at Lausus: 'infelix alieno volnere.'"

"I dare say, Mr. Diggle," interrupted Desmond, "but I have no time to construe Latin." Covering Diggle with his pistol, Desmond stooped over Fuzl Khan's prostrate body and discovered in a moment that the poor fellow's heart had ceased to beat. He rose, and added: "I must trouble you to come with me; and quickly, for you perceive you are at my mercy."

"Where do you propose to take me, my friend?"

"We will go this way, and please step out."

Diggle scowled, and stood as though meditating resistance.

"Come, come, Mr. Diggle, you have no choice. I do not wish to have to drag you; it might cause you pain."

"Surely you will spare a moment to an old friend! I fear you are entirely mistaken. 'Tis pity that with the natural ebullition of your youthful spirit you should have set upon a man whom——"

"You can talk as we go, Mr. Diggle, if you talk low enough. Must I repeat it?"

"But where are we going? Really, Mr. Burke, respect for my years should prompt a more considerate treatment."

"You see yonder point?" said Desmond impatiently—"yonder on the shore. You will come with me there."

Diggle looked round as if hoping that even now something might happen in his favour. But no one was in sight; Desmond stood over him with sword still drawn; and recognizing his helplessness the man at length turned towards the shore and began to walk slowly along, Desmond a foot or so in the rear.

Ten minutes later Diggle was assisted up the side of the *Kent*, and handed over to the officer of the watch. Then Desmond made his report to Clive.

"All the enemy are withdrawn within the fort, sir. The whole ground between the fort and the shore is clear. There is nothing to obstruct your landing."

"I thank you. You have exceeded your time by ten minutes. Who is that man who came aboard with you?"

"It was he that delayed me, sir. It is Mr. Diggle."

"The deuce he is!"

"He was stealing out of the fort; it came to a scuffle, and he was wounded—so I brought him along."

"Mr. Speke," said Clive, turning to the captain, "may I ask you to see this man safe bestowed? I will deal with him when our business here is concluded. Mr. Burke, you will come with me."

By nine o'clock Clive had landed his troops. They bivouacked on the shore, in expectation of storming the fort next day. At daybreak an officer was sent into the fort with a flag of truce to demand its surrender. This being refused, the Admiral ordered his ships to warp within a cable's length of the walls in three fathoms and a quarter of water, and the attack was renewed by sea and land, Clive gradually advancing and worrying the enemy with his cannon. At two o'clock a magazine in the fort blew up, and not long after, just as Clive was about to give the order to storm, a white flag was seen fluttering at one of the bastions. A messenger was sent to the governor to arrange the capitulation, but when he was met by prevarication and pleas for delay the bombardment was once more resumed. A few minutes of this sufficed to bring the defenders to reason, and by five o'clock the English flag flew upon the walls.

Clive postponed his entry until dawn on the following morning.

"By Jove, Mr. Burke," he said to Desmond, who showed him the way to the palace, "if we had been within these walls I think we could have held out till doomsday."

All the English officers were impressed by the strength of the fortifications. Besides Angria's 250 cannon, an immense quantity of stores and ammunition fell into the hands of the captors. In the vaults of the palace were found silver rupees to the value of £100,000, and treasure worth £30,000 more. The capture had been effected with the loss of only twenty killed and wounded.

Desmond took the earliest opportunity of seeking the body of Fuzl Khan. Fortunately the fires and the noises of the night had preserved

"Unable to check his rush, he received the point of
Diggle's sword in his throat."

it from mangling by wild beasts. The poor man lay where he had fallen, near the body of the overseer.

"Poor fellow!" thought Desmond, looking at the strong, fierce face and the gigantic frame now stiff and cold. "Little he knew, when he said he'd serve me to his life's end, that the end was so near."

That evening Clive summoned Desmond to attend him in the palace. When he entered the durbar hall, he saw a small group seated on the daïs, consisting of Clive, Admiral Watson, and two or three subordinate officers. Standing in front of them was Diggle, in the charge of two marines.

"How many European prisoners have been released, Mr. Ward?" the Admiral was saying.

"Thirteen, sir; ten English and three Dutch."

"Is that correct, Mr. Burke? Was that the number when you were here?"

"Yes, sir, that is correct."

"Then you may go, Mr. Ward, and see that the poor fellows are taken on board the *Tyger* and well looked after." As the officer saluted and withdrew the Admiral turned to Clive.

"Now for this white pirate," he said: "a most unpleasant matter, truly."

Signing to the marines to bring forward their prisoner, he threw himself back upon the divan, leaving the matter in Clive's hands. Clive was gazing hard at Diggle, who had lost the look of terror he had worn two nights before, and stood before them in his usual attitude of careless ease.

"You captured this man," said Clive, turning to Desmond, "within the precincts of the fort?"

His hard level tone contrasted strongly with the urbaner manner of the Admiral.

"Yes, sir," replied Desmond.

"He is the same man who inveigled you on board the interloper *Good Intent* and delivered you to the Pirate?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he was to your knowledge associated with the Pirate, and offered you inducements to spy upon His Majesty's forces in Bombay ? "

"Yes, sir."

"Have you anything to say for yourself, Mr. Diggle ? "

"Yes. You accuse me of piracy ; I have a complete answer to that charge ; but as an Englishman I claim an Englishman's right—a fair trial before a jury of my countrymen. In any case, Mr. Clive, it would be invidious to give me worse treatment than Monaji Angria and his officers. As for the rest, it depends on the evidence of this single witness."

Here Admiral Watson bent forward and said to Clive in an undertone, inaudible to the others :

"I think we had better defer this. If, as you suppose, the fellow has knowledge of the French plans, it would be only politic to give Mr. Bourchier an opportunity of inquiring into the matter. No doubt he richly deserves hanging, but *dead* men tell no tales."

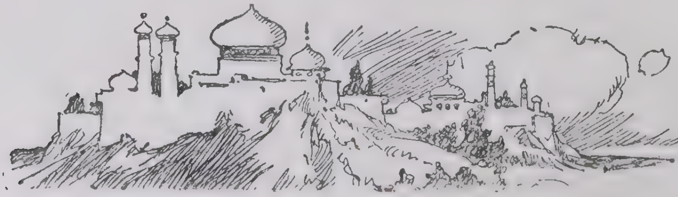
Clive frowned, and drumming upon the divan impatiently with his fingers, seemed for the moment to be lost in thought. Then he said :

"Yes, Mr. Watson, I think you are right."

"Take the prisoner back to your ship," said the Admiral, "and put him under double guard. Thank you, Mr. Burke ; we shall require your evidence in Bombay. One word before you go. I am vastly indebted to you for your services ; you have been of the greatest use to myself and my captains. Your name will frequently appear in our ships' logs, and I shall take care to show your work in the proper light when I make my report. Meanwhile, when the division of prize-money is made, you will receive a lieutenant's share. Good-night, sir."

And Desmond's face, as he left the room, bore a flush of happiness and pride.

From *One of Clive's Heroes.*



BALLAD FOR A BOY

By WILLIAM CORY

When George the Third was reigning, a hundred years ago,
He ordered Captain Farmer to chase the foreign foe.
"You're not afraid of shot," said he, "you're not afraid of wreck;
So cruise about the west of France, in a frigate called *Quebec*.

"Quebec was once a Frenchman's town, but twenty years ago
King George the Second sent a man called General Wolfe, you know,
To clamber up the precipice and look into Quebec,
As you'd look down a hatchway when standing on the deck.

"If Wolfe could beat the Frenchmen then, so you can beat them now:
Before he got inside the town he died, I must allow.
But since the town was won for us it is a lucky name;
And you'll remember Wolfe's good work, and you shall do the same."

Then Farmer said, " I'll try, sir," and Farmer bowed so low
That George could see his pigtail tied in a velvet bow.
George gave him his commission, and that it might be safer,
Signed " King of Britain, King of France," and sealed it with a wafer.

Then proud was Captain Farmer in a frigate of his own,
And grander on his quarter-deck than George upon the throne:
He'd two guns in his cabin, and on the spar-deck ten,
And twenty on the gun-deck, and more than ten score men.

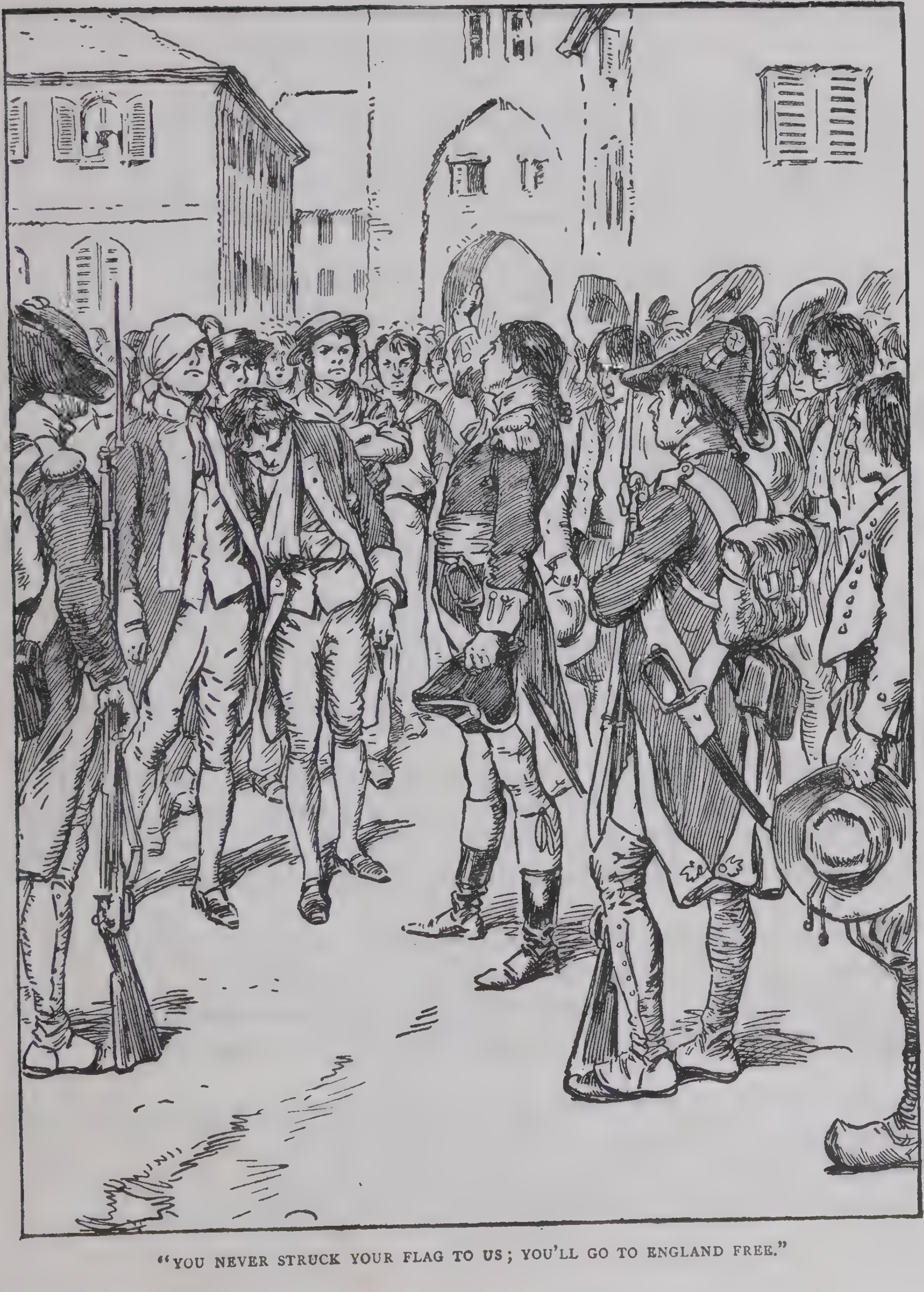
And as a huntsman scours the brakes with sixteen brace of dogs,
With two-and-thirty cannon the ship explored the fogs.
From Cape la Hogue to Ushant, from Rochefort to Belleisle,
She hunted game till reef and mud were rubbing on her keel.

The fogs are dried, the frigate's side is bright with melting tar,
And laid up in the foretop sees square white sails afar;
The east wind drives three square-sailed masts from out the Breton Bay,
And " Clear for action ! " Farmer shouts, and reefers yell " Hooray ! "

The Frenchman's captain had a name I wish I could pronounce;
A Breton gentleman was he, and wholly free from bounce,
One like those famous fellows who died by guillotine
For honour of the fleur-de-lis, and Antoinette the Queen.

The Catholic for Louis, the Protestant for George,
Each captain drew as bright a sword as saintly smiths could forge;
And both were simple seamen, but both could understand
How each was bound to win or die for flag and native land.

The French ship was *La Surveillante*, which means *the watchful maid;*
She folded up her headdress and began to cannonade.
Her hull was clean, and ours was foul; we had to spread more sail;
On canvas, stays, and topsail yards her bullets came like hail.



"YOU NEVER STRUCK YOUR FLAG TO US; YOU'LL GO TO ENGLAND FREE."

BALLAD FOR A BOY

Sore smitten were both captains, and many lads beside,
And still to cut our rigging the foreign gunners tried.
A sail-clad spar came flapping down across a blazing gun;
We could not quench the rushing flames, and so the Frenchman won.

Our quarter-deck was crowded, the waist was all aglow;
Men hung upon the taffrail half-scorched, but loath to go;
Our captain sat where once he stood, and would not quit his chair.
He bade his comrades leap for life, and leave him bleeding there.

The guns were hushed on either side, the Frenchmen lowered boats,
They flung us planks and hencoops, and everything that floats.
They risked their lives, good fellows! to bring their rivals aid.
'Twas by the conflagration the peace was strangely made.

La Surveillante was like a sieve; the victors had no rest.
They had to dodge the east wind to reach the port of Brest.
And where the waves leaped lower and the riddled ship went slower,
In triumph, yet in funeral guise, came fisher-boats to tow her.

They dealt with us like brethren, they mourned for Farmer dead;
And as the wounded captives passed each Breton bowed his head.
Then spoke the French lieutenant, "'Twas fire that won, not we,
You never struck your flag to us; you'll go to England free."

'Twas the sixth day of October, seventeen hundred seventy-nine,
A year when nations ventured against us to combine,
Quebec was burnt and Farmer slain, by us remembered not;
But thanks be to the French book wherein they're not forgot.

Now you, if you've to fight the French, my youngster, bear in mind
Those seamen of King Louis so chivalrous and kind;
Think of the Breton gentlemen who took our lads to Brest,
And treat some rescued Breton as a comrade and a guest.

THE LAST OF THE BUCCANEERS

By W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS

Henry Morgan, one of the most famous, and certainly the ablest, of the buccaneers, *flibustiers*, or sea-rovers, who in the seventeenth century carried on a predatory warfare against the Spanish settlements in the West Indies and on the American mainland, was the son of an affluent Welsh farmer. At an early age his bold and adventurous temper rebelled against his father's peaceful vocation, and making his way to the sea-coast, he took passage for Barbadoes. On landing, he paid his passage-money by selling his labour for a stipulated term; after which he made his way to Jamaica, where he found a couple of ships fitting out for a buccaneering expedition. On board one of these he shipped, and quickly distinguished himself above his comrades by his daring, his readiness, and his cool, clear intelligence. Having acquired a considerable sum of money, he persuaded some of his comrades to join him in purchasing a vessel to cruise on their own account. Of this, which was well-manned and well-equipped, he was appointed commander, and hovering about the coast of Campeachy, he made several important captures, with the spoil of which he returned to Jamaica. There he met with a celebrated pirate named Mansvelt, who was busily fitting out a large fleet, with which he intended to land on the continent and attack the Spaniards in their garrisoned cities. Recognizing the high qualities of Morgan, Mansvelt appointed him his vice-admiral; and with fifteen ships and 500 men they sailed from Jamaica and steered for the island of St. Catherine, which lies off the coast of Costa Rica, about one hundred miles to the north of the river Chagres.

Having disembarked their force, they compelled the garrison to surrender all the fortified places, which they immediately demolished,

hastily summoned all the able-bodied men, and marched to intercept the buccaneers, who, having escaped some ambuscades that had been laid for them with more energy than skill, debouched upon an open plain in front of the town. On their advance, the Spaniard detached a troop of horse to charge them in the front, with the view of dispersing them and pursuing them with his main body; but he underestimated the courage and tenacity of his enemies, who repulsed his cavalry with severe loss, and falling upon his volunteer lines, scattered them to the winds. In the contest, which lasted for about five hours, he received a mortal wound. The town still offered a brave resistance; the inhabitants barricading their houses, and pouring volleys of musketry from their windows, or hurling down heavy articles of furniture, as the buccaneers forced their way through the streets. But when Morgan sternly proclaimed that, if the defence were prolonged, he would burn the town to the ground, and put every man, woman, and child to the sword, they threw down their arms, and hoisted the white flag in token of submission.

Morgan had observed with vexation that, during the action, they had carried off their most valuable property; nor could the tortures to which he subjected them extort from them any information of their hiding-places. Spaniards of both sexes, even children were shut up in the churches, and died—most of them from hunger. The buccaneers exacted a twofold ransom: one for themselves, if they did not wish to be transported to America; and the other for their town, if they would save it from the flames. Five prisoners were sent into the woods to collect it, either from the richer townsmen who had sought refuge there, or by any other means. They speedily returned with the assurance that the whole amount should be paid within a fortnight. To this delay Morgan at first consented; but having captured a negro with a letter on his person from the Governor of Santiago,—advising the Spaniards to withhold payment and amuse the pirates until he could come to their assistance,—he insisted that payment should be made on the day following, but offered to take, in full acquittance of his demands, five hundred head of cattle. These having been delivered to him, and six of the principal inhabitants as hostages, he set sail.

THE LAST OF THE BUCCANEERS

Hitherto the depredations of the buccaneers had been confined to the islands of the Spanish Main. Morgan, who wanted only opportunity and a wider sphere of action to have become the founder of a maritime empire, conceived the bold design of operating against the rich settlements on the continent. When his fleet was off Costa Rica he called his captains together, and made known to them his intentions to attack Porto Bello. To encourage them, he added that the enterprise could not fail, seeing that he had kept it secret, and that the inhabitants would have no notice of his coming. Some objected that they had not a sufficient number of men to assault so strong and great a city. "If our number be small," replied Morgan, "our hearts are great; and the fewer we are, the larger will be each man's share of the plunder." Still, the enterprise was one which might well fill the prudent with alarm. Porto Bello was then one of the strongest of the Spanish American towns; its harbour was defended by two forts of a formidable character; it was garrisoned by 300 regular troops, and had a population of between 2,000 and 3,000 souls.

If Morgan was audacious in conception, he was not less wary in execution. Well acquainted with the neighbouring coast, at nightfall he carried his fleet into a lonely harbour, called Nars, about thirty miles from Porto Bello. Into this harbour flows a river from the westward, its waters winding through the green gloom of a dense and intertangled forest. Disembarking his fighting men in boats and canoes, he ascended the river to another harbour, where he landed, and under cover of the darkness followed up an Indian trail until it brought them in sight of the sleeping town. Morgan then detached four men, under the conduct of an Englishman who had at one time languished in its prison, to seize or kill the sentinel at the advanced post. His capture was so cleverly made that he had no time to give an alarm; and being brought before Morgan, with his hands bound, and a couple of pistols at his head, he was terrified into giving a full account of the defences of the town. The buccaneers were thus enabled to advance, undiscovered, to the very walls of one of the forts that commanded the harbour-mouth—where the Spanish prisoner was compelled to speak to his fellow-countrymen, charging them to surrender immediately, or they would be cut in pieces, and no quarter given. The threat had no effect, and the garrison opened fire. After an obstinate resistance, they were forced to yield, and Morgan resolved to make a terrible example of them. He caused all the soldiers and officers to be shut up in one room, set fire to the powder magazine, and blew the castle and all it contained into the air. This done, he fell upon the city, and a bloody battle ensued, lasting from break of day till noon. The Spaniards fought with such desperate resolution that its issue seemed at one time uncertain; but a cruel stratagem of Morgan's decided it in his favour. He ordered a dozen stout ladders to be put together, and collecting a number of priests and nuns whom he had made prisoners, compelled them to advance before his companies, and lay the ladders against the walls of the castle which still held out. He had calculated by this means to check the fire of the Spaniards; but though deceived in his expectation, as the Spaniards continued the conflict with the utmost ardour, he was successful in getting his ladders fixed with scarcely any loss to his own men,—who swarmed up them, beat down the slackening defence of the garrison, slew the brave commander, and carried the fort.

Thus with only four hundred men, and without a single piece of artillery, Morgan captured a strong and populous town, displaying the highest courage and conduct throughout the daring enterprise.

For a spirit and a temper like Morgan's rest was impossible; and encouraged by his success, he hastened to equip a second expedition. Recruits were not wanting; men of reckless daring and few scruples eagerly offered their services to so competent a chief.

He summoned a council of his officers to decide on their next expedition, and proposed to them to sail towards the island of Savona, and there lie in wait for some rich merchant-ships which were known to be on their way from Spain.

He set sail and, after experiencing a severe storm, reached the port of Orva, where he landed some of his men to draw water and collect fresh provisions. They killed many beasts, and among others some horses. "But the Spaniards, not well satisfied at their hunting, laid a stratagem for them, ordering 300 or 400 men to come from San Domingo, and desiring them to hunt in all parts thereabout near the sea, that so, if any of the pirates should return, they might find no subsistence. Within a few days the same pirates returned to hunt, but finding nothing to kill, a party of about fifty straggled farther on into the woods; the Spaniards, who watched all their motions, gathered a great herd of cows, and set two or three men to keep them. The pirates, having spied them, killed a sufficient number, and though the Spaniards could see them at a distance, yet they would not hinder them at present; but as soon as they attempted to carry them away, they set upon them furiously, crying, '*Mata, mata,*' or, Kill, kill. Thus the pirates were soon compelled to quit their prey and retreat to their ships; but they did it in good order, retiring by degrees, and, when they had opportunity, discharging full volleys on the Spaniards, killing many of the enemy, though with some loss."

As all his ships did not arrive, and his crews numbered no more than 500 men, Morgan thought it advisable to alter his design; and at the instigation of the notorious Pierre-la-Picard, who had served under Olonois in his expedition against Maracaibo, he resolved on sacking that unfortunate town a second time. He arrived in safety at the lake or sea of that name, but to his surprise found the passage commanded by a strong force, which opened a heavy fire upon his men while they were getting into their boats. Nothing daunted, he ordered an attack; whereupon the Spaniards took to flight, after having deposited a lighted match near the powder magazine in order to blow up the fortress and the pirates in it. But Morgan discovered the train when it was on the very verge of explosion, and snatching away the match, saved the lives of himself and his companions. He found in the fort thirty quintals of powder, numerous guns and pikes, sixteen large cannon, and other war material, which he removed on board his fleet.

The shallowness of the lake proved a formidable obstacle to the advance of the buccaneers; but the admirable patience and tenacity of their commander eventually prevailed, and with a flotilla of canoes and small boats, he made his appearance before the town. To his astonishment it was empty; the whole population had fled. Next day he sent out a skirmishing party, who, after scouring the neighbourhood, returned with some thirty unfortunate creatures, men, women, and children, and with fifty mules laden with merchandise. The prisoners were subjected to cruel tortures to make them reveal the hiding-places of the inhabitants and of their goods. By these means Morgan at length got into his hands about one hundred of the principal families, with all their goods, and he then determined to sail for a place called (after the famous European rock) Gibraltar. He was received there with several volleys of cannon shot, which, however, the buccaneers regarded with indifference. "We must make a meal upon better things," they said to one another, "before we can enjoy the sweetness of the sugar which this place affords."

Early next day Morgan landed his desperadoes, and advanced upon the town through a maze of forest-growth which completely covered their approach. When the Spaniards saw the glitter of their arms, they lost heart, and remembering the terrible deeds done by the buccaneers under Olonois, fled from the town like a flock of sheep.

During the five weeks that the buccaneers remained at Gibraltar, the town was a scene of horror. Scouring parties every day brought back some of the fugitives, upon whom they practised the most ingenious cruelties.

Having extorted a ransom of 5,000 pieces of eight, Morgan marched out of Gibraltar, embarked his men on board their light flotilla of boats and canoes, and descended the lagoon to Maracaibo. Here he obtained information which disturbed even *his* intrepidity; three Spanish men-of-war had arrived off the entrance to the lake, and awaited his return; while the castle had been put into a good posture of defence, and well provided with guns, men, and all kinds of ammunition. In this strait he showed the cool, calm temper of his daring nature. As if he were at the head of a powerful and victorious fleet, he sent a message to the Spanish commodore, demanding a considerable ransom for not burning to the ground the town of Maracaibo; to which the Spaniard rejoined by offering to let him and his men pass without trouble or molestation, if they gave up all their booty, the slaves they had taken, and their prisoners. These terms were peremptorily rejected by Morgan, who prepared to force the passage of the lake, and for this purpose fitted out a formidable fire-ship; placed all his prisoners in one great boat, and in

another all the women, plate, jewels, and other costly wares; while the rest of the goods and merchandise were stored away in craft suitable for the purpose.

On the 30th of April, 1669, having made his men swear to defend themselves to the last drop of their blood, and to ask no quarter, he hoisted sail, and at daybreak steered directly towards the Spaniards. The fire-ship, sailing in advance, fell upon the Spanish admiral, who was soon in flames. The second man-of-war, at this awful spectacle, steered towards the castle, where she was sunk by her own crew. The third, having no opportunity of escape, was captured by the buccaneers.

Returning with all his fleet to Maracaibo, Morgan refitted for his own use the great Spanish ship which he had captured, and then sent another message to the admiral, offering to spare the town for a ransom of 80,000 pieces of eight and 500 beeves. The admiral would not consent; but the authorities of Maracaibo were glad to be quit of such unpleasant visitors on moderate terms, and paid the ransom with as good a grace as possible. It was then divided, together with the vast amount of plunder that had been collected, among the different ships; and Morgan addressed himself to the task of effecting the passage of the lake into the open sea. Where the lion's skin would not avail, Morgan eked it out with the fox's, and to deceive the Spaniards he resorted to a curious stratagem. He embarked a number of his men in canoes, who rowed towards the shore as if they designed to land. Then they concealed themselves under the thick foliage of the overhanging trees, and lay down in the boats, which afterwards returned to the ships, with only two or three men at the oars. This pretended disembarkation of men was repeated several times, with the effect of deluding the Spaniards into a belief that the buccaneers intended, under cover of night, to storm the castle. As a measure of precaution, therefore, they removed most of their great guns, and stationed their garrison on the landward defences, leaving the side towards the sea almost without protection.

It was a moonlit night, and the soft silvery radiance filled earth and air and sea as the rovers, with sails furled, silently and slowly dropped down the river with the ebbing tide; when near the castle they spread out all their canvas as if by magic. The Spaniards in angry surprise made haste to remove their guns from the landward side, and to open a furious fire; but a favourable wind carried the buccaneers swiftly out of range, with little loss of life or injury to their spars or rigging. Then they raised three tremendous cheers of exultation and defiance, and Morgan discharged seven great guns, loaded with ball, at the fort, as an appropriate farewell.

Encouraged by success, and incapable of prolonged inaction, Morgan speedily resolved upon fresh enterprises. On arriving at Jamaica, he had found many of his officers and soldiers already reduced to their former indigency by their riotous living. Hence they continually solicited him to lead them to fresh woods and pastures new, where they might retrieve their shattered fortunes. Nothing loath, he proclaimed a new expedition; and so famous was his name throughout the West Indies and the Spanish Main, that volunteers immediately came forward in large numbers. He appointed a rendezvous on the south side of the island of Tortuga for the pirates of that island and Jamaica. Another, for adventurers from other parts of the Antilles, was fixed at Port Conilem, on the south coast of Hispaniola. By the 24th of October, 1670, a new fleet had assembled, and Morgan, arriving punctually from Jamaica, assumed the command. He found himself well furnished with ships and men, with guns and munitions of war; but he considered the supply of provisions inadequate for so large a force. He therefore dispatched four vessels to the mainland, to cruise along the coast and pillage the towns and villages for corn and cattle; while hunting-parties were scattered through all the forests of San Domingo in search of game. At the end of five weeks vast stores were accumulated, and his ships being in perfect order, Morgan set sail for Cape Tiburon, at the west end of Hispaniola, where he laid in wood and water, and was joined by several volunteers from Jamaica. Reviewing his armada, he found himself in command of thirty-seven vessels, manned by 2,200 hardy and experienced mariners.

Morgan divided his fleet into two squadrons, one under his immediate command, the other under a vice-admiral, and issued to his captains commissions or letters-patent, to practise every kind of hostility against the Spanish nation, to capture what Spanish ships they could, either on the open sea or in harbours, just "as if they were the open and declared enemies of the King of England, Charles II, my master." It is this element of patriotism and loyalty which distinguishes the English buccaneers from common pirates. They were Englishmen first and buccaneers afterwards. There is no instance recorded, we believe, of any outrage done upon Englishmen, or any injury offered to English ships, while the buccaneers were under Morgan's command.

After due deliberation, Morgan resolved to direct his formidable armada against the opulent city of Panama. As it was situated on the west or Pacific coast of the isthmus, it would be necessary to leave the fleet in some harbour on the eastern side, and march for several days through an unknown country; but he calculated that there would be no difficulty in obtaining guides, and that the Spaniards would be unprepared against a sudden attack. As a preliminary he prepared to capture the island of St. Catherine, which would afford a convenient base for his contemplated operations; and hoisting the royal English flag at his own masthead, and at his vice-admiral's the blood-red banner of the sea-rovers, emblazoned with the white cross of Christianity, he sailed from Cape Tiburon on the 16th day of December.

After a swift voyage Morgan reached St. Catherine, which was then used by the Spaniards as a penal colony. Landing a thousand men, the buccaneer chief sent word to the Spanish governor, that if within a few hours he did not deliver himself and all his men into his (Morgan's) hands, he did swear to him and all who were in his company, that he would most certainly put them to the sword. The governor was so terrified by the message that he at once agreed to surrender, on condition that, to save the honour of the garrison, a sham combat took place. Accordingly it was arranged that Morgan should attack by night; that the governor should feign an attempt to escape from one fort to another, and that Morgan's troops should then intercept and capture him! A lively fire was to be maintained on both sides, but the guns were to be loaded only with powder. This strange farce was actually played out. The guns vented an ineffectual roar. The buccaneers, fully armed, advanced to the assault; the forms of warfare were duly observed without any serious fighting; the Spaniards surrendered; and without the loss of a single man, Morgan found himself in possession of St. Catherine.

There were two forts on the island, mounted with sixty-eight guns, and so strongly defended by nature that with very small garrisons they might have offered a prolonged resistance. Besides an immense quantity of muskets and hand-grenades, which eventually proved very serviceable, the buccaneers found in the arsenal upwards of three hundred quintals of gunpowder. All these valuable stores they removed on board the fleet; the guns of which they could not make use were spiked. The forts were demolished, with the exception of that of St. Jerome, into which Morgan threw a strong garrison. Among the malefactors imprisoned in the island, he selected three to act as his guides across the isthmus, promising them their liberty on his return to Jamaica, and equal shares in the plunder of the expedition.

Morgan sent in advance four ships and a large boat, under Vice-

Admiral Bradley, to capture Chagres. The voyage occupied them only three days. The castle of Chagres, called by the Spaniards St. Lawrence, was situated on an eminence commanding the mouth of the river, and was nearly inaccessible on every side. As soon as the pirates' squadron hove in sight, the Spaniards opened fire; but instead of immediately assaulting the position, the buccaneers landed about a mile from the castle, and proceeded to cut a way through the woods, to attack it on its least defended side. Their march was greatly impeded by the intertanglements of the lianas and creepers, the difficulties of the way, its swamps and morasses; and though their guides served them faithfully, it was two of the clock in the afternoon before they could reach the castle. Debouching upon an open plain, they suffered much from the fire of the enemy; but with their swords in one hand, and their grenades or "fire-balls" in the other, they rushed impetuously to the assault. The Spaniards made a brisk resistance, firing continually, and shouting, "Come on, ye English dogs, enemies to God and our king! Let your companions that are in the rear come on also; ye shall not go to Panama this bout!" The buccaneers, after a vain effort to climb the walls, fell back, and rested until night in what covert they could find. Then, in the darkness, they renewed the assault, seeking with their fire-balls to burn down the palisades. While they were thus engaged, a strange accident occurred, which eventually gave them the victory. One of them being wounded with an arrow, desperately pulled it from his flesh, and, winding a little cotton about it, thrust it into his musket, and contemptuously shot it back into the castle. The cotton, ignited by the powder, set fire to the palm-leaf thatch on two or three roofs, and the gathering flames spreading towards a store of gunpowder, blew it up, thereby causing serious destruction to the buildings, and filling the Spaniards with consternation.

Encouraged by this incident, the buccaneers renewed their efforts to set fire to the palisades, and in several places succeeded. Through the gaps thus created they forced their way, and, nothing daunted by the flames and smoke which rolled around, beat down the stubborn defence of the Spaniards, and after a prolonged and desperate struggle, in which the governor and nearly all his men perished, carried the castle.

THE LAST OF THE BUCCANEERS

Morgan did not linger long at St. Catherine's after the capture of Chagres; but before setting sail, he embarked all the provisions he could collect, together with ample stores of maize and cassava. In a certain place he threw all the heavy guns into the sea, designing to return and recover them, and so fortify the island that it might afford the buccaneers a permanent point of operations. He arrived in Chagres river in eight days. So great was the exultation of the buccaneers when they saw the English colours floating from the castle walls, that, in their carelessness, they ran four of their ships ashore at the very mouth of the river. The crews and cargoes, however, were all saved.

The buccaneers ushered their leader into the castle with shouts of welcome and rejoicing. With characteristic energy he at once set the prisoners to work on the repair of the defences. In the river he found some small vessels used for the transport of merchandise into the interior. These he manned with his rovers to the number of 150; in the castle he posted a garrison of 500; and then, at the head of 1,200 men, he set out on his daring enterprise against Panama (August 18th, 1670), in thirty-two canoes and five boats, carrying heavy guns.

The first day they sailed only six leagues, and halted in the dusk at a place called De los Bracos. Here some of the men landed to sleep and stretch their limbs, which were almost crippled with confinement in the crowded boats. Having rested awhile, they dispersed, in order to seek for food in the neighbouring plantations; but the Spaniards had fled and carried with them their little stores. As Morgan had refused to allow his men to encumber themselves with provisions, hoping to seize all the supplies they might need upon the march, they suffered a good deal from scanty rations, and many were forced to be content with only a pipe of tobacco.

On the second day they came to Cruz de Juan Gallego, where they were forced to leave their boats and canoes, the river having fallen for want of rain, and the channel being obstructed by blown and riven trunks of trees. The guides told them that about two leagues farther they would come to a tract of country favourable for an advance by land. So leaving 160 men on board the boats to defend them, that they might serve for a refuge in necessity, they all disembarked. To the crews left in charge Morgan issued stringent orders that no man, on any pretence whatever, should quit the boats and go ashore, for he apprehended that in the thick shades of the neighbouring woods the Spaniards might have posted an ambuscade.

Beginning their march on the third morning, Morgan found the way so bad and difficult, that he deemed it more convenient, notwithstanding the labour, to transport some of his company in canoes to a point farther up the river, known as Cedro Bueno. On the fourth day the greater portion of his little army marched by land, led by one of the guides, while the rest went by water, conducted by another guide, who always preceded them in order to look out for ambuscades.

They reached at night Torna Musini and searched the neighbouring woods with wolfish eyes, but nowhere could detect " the least crumb of sustenance," the Spaniards having carefully removed every kind of provision. " Here again he was happy who had reserved since noon any bit of leather to make his supper off, drinking after it a good draught of water for his comfort. Some, who never were out of their mother's kitchens, may ask how these pirates could cut and digest those pieces of leather, so hard and dry. Whom I answer, that could they once experience what hunger, or rather famine, is, they would find the way as the pirates did. For these first sliced it in pieces, then they beat it between two stones, and rubbed it, often dipping it in water to make it supple and tender. Lastly, they scraped off the hair and broiled it. Being thus cooked, they cut it into small morsels, and ate it, helping it down with frequent gulps of water, which by good fortune they had at hand."

On the seventh day they crossed the river, to continue their march on the other side. Before long they came in sight of the smoking chimneys of a village, not less grateful to their hungry eyes than were the lights on the island-shores of San Salvador to the companions of Columbus. With fond hopes of finding " plenty of good cheer," they quickened their advance, encouraging one another by saying : " Smoke comes out, d'ye see, of every house. They are making good fires to roast and boil what we are to eat ! " At length they reached the village, but found there not a living soul, nor any refreshment for body or mind.

Fires, indeed, were not wanting, for every Spaniard, before making his escape, had set fire to his house. After much searching, they found fifteen or sixteen jars of Peru wine, and a leather sack full of bread; but they had no sooner drunk of the wine than they fell sick, almost every man. Naturally they feared that the wine was poisoned, and a panic seized the little army. However, after a while they revived, their illness having been caused simply by the inability of the stomach to take full sustenance after so many days of privation.

Great was the joy of Morgan and his heroes—for heroes they were, if unconquerable endurance and patient courage and steadfast purpose can make men heroic—when, on the ninth day of their arduous enterprise, they ascended to the summit of a mountain-ridge which showed them, stretching far away to the purple distance, the radiant waters of the great South Sea. So Nuñez de Balboa, so Francis Drake, had looked forth upon that grand and glorious ocean. Descending the rugged slopes, they entered a fair valley, where herds of cattle were pasturing, and speedily made amends for their prolonged fast. Huge fires were kindled, and oxen and cows, even horses and asses, cut up into pieces and swiftly roasted.

When they had satisfied their hunger, Morgan ordered them to continue their march. In advance of the main body he sent some fifty men, to take some prisoners if they could; for he was much concerned that in nine days he had not met with a single person to give information of the numbers and condition of the Spaniards. Towards dusk they came in sight of the highest spire of Panama, whereupon they showed signs of extreme joy, throwing up their hats into the air, leaping and shouting as if they were already victorious, and had accomplished their designs. Their trumpeters pealed forth a merry strain, and the drums beat triumphantly.

The tenth day, betimes in the morning, they put all their men in order, and, with drums and trumpets sounding, marched directly towards the city; but one of the guides desired Captain Morgan not to take the common highway, lest they should find in it many ambuscades. He took his advice, and chose another way through the wood, though very irksome and difficult. The Spaniards perceiving the pirates had taken another way they scarce had thought on, were compelled to leave their stops and batteries, and come out to meet them. The Governor of Panama put his forces in order, consisting of two squadrons, four regiments of foot, and a large number of wild bulls, which were driven by a great number of Indians, with some negroes and others to help them.

The pirates, now upon their march, came to the top of a little hill, whence they had a large prospect of the city and the champaign country underneath. Here they discovered the forces of the people of Panama, in battle array, to be so numerous, that they were surprised with fear, much doubting the fortune of the day. Yea, few or none there were but wished themselves at home, or at least free from the obligation of that engagement, so nearly concerning their lives. Having been some time wavering in their minds, they at last reflected on the straits they had brought themselves into, and that now they must either fight resolutely or die, for no quarter could be expected from an enemy on whom they had committed so many cruelties. Thereupon they encouraged one another, resolving to conquer, or spend the last drop of blood. Then they divided themselves into three battalions, sending before two hundred buccaneers who were very dexterous at their guns; then, descending the hill, they marched directly towards the Spaniards, who in a spacious field waited for their coming.

The battle lasted for three hours; and notwithstanding the superiority of the Spaniards in numbers and weapons, went wholly in favour of the buccaneers. The Spanish cavalry were almost cut to pieces. A squadron or two escaped with the remains of the infantry, who flung away their arms, in order to accelerate their flight. Six hundred Spaniards lay dead on the battlefield; probably they lost as many more in wounded and prisoners.

Morgan's work, however, was not yet done. There still remained, as the prize to be won and enjoyed, the bright, populous, and affluent city of Panama, with its ring of protecting forts and batteries. He knew that in his position audacity gave the best chance of success; and though his men were weary with battle and slaughter, led them at once to the assault of the town. The Spanish artillery tore great gaps in his ranks, but he pressed forward with grim indifference, and before nightfall Panama was in his hands. It was delivered over to instant pillage.

The buccaneers quitted the ruined city on the 24th of February, 1671. On the same day they reached a river which washes a delicious plain about three miles from Panama. Here Morgan marshalled his forces in good order, stationing his prisoners in the centre, "where nothing else was to be heard but lamentations, cries, shrieks, and doleful sighs of so many women and children, who feared Captain Morgan designed to transport them all into his own country for slaves. Besides, all those miserable prisoners endured extreme hunger and thirst at that time, which misery Captain Morgan designedly caused them to sustain, to excite them to seek for moneys to ransom themselves according to the tax he had set upon every one. Many of the women begged Captain Morgan on their knees, with infinite sighs and tears, to let them return to Panama, there to live with their dear husbands and children in little huts of straw, which they would erect, seeing they had no houses till the rebuilding of the city. But his answer was: 'He came not thither to hear lamentations and cries, but to seek moneys; therefore they ought first to seek out *that*, wherever it was to be had, and bring it to him; otherwise he would assuredly transport them all to such places whither they cared not to go.'"

It was natural enough that the men should quarrel over the division of the spoil, which took place soon after their return to Chagres. The whole was valued at only 2,000,000 dollars, which gave to every man a share of about one thousand dollars, or a tenth of what he had sanguinely expected. Many of them did not scruple to accuse Morgan of having reserved the most valuable jewels for himself. To these complaints he showed his usual calm indifference, until, having no longer any occasion to stay at Chagres, he ordered its walls and principal buildings to be demolished; and while the buccaneers were engaged in this congenial work of destruction, he slipped quietly on board his flagship, and, accompanied by the English division, put out to sea.

Of the later career of this extraordinary man, who, like Byron's Corsair, has left his name to other times—

"Linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes,"

we know but little. In Jamaica his immense wealth, and the fame of his achievements, secured him a conspicuous position, and Charles II, who is reputed to have secretly favoured and shared in his enterprises, made him a baronet, and appointed him governor of the island. He seems to have closed his remarkable career in peace. In forming our judgment of his character, it is only fair to remember that the story of his deeds has been told by an obviously prejudiced pen; but even when this exception has been taken, we fear it is impossible to acquit him of great cruelty and insatiable avarice. That he was capable of conceiving and carrying into execution the boldest designs, the preceding pages must very clearly demonstrate; and the fact that no open mutiny broke out in any one of his expeditions, proves not less clearly that he possessed that faculty of influencing and governing men which is essential to a successful leader.

From *Shore and Sea.*